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Life & Writings of Joseph Mazzini

VOL. II.—CRITICAL & LITERARY.

LIFE & WRITINGS

OF

JOSEPH MAZZINI

VOL. II.

CRITICAL & LITERARY.

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PREFACE, 1861.

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I HAVE said in the first volume that when, from the year 1828 to 1832, we were fighting the battles of *Romanticism* against the antiquated rules of the *Classical* school, our real object was to combat that double tyranny—internal and external, political and religious—by which our country was dismembered and oppressed; and by attacking it upon the only ground then open to us, to further the cause of National Revolution.

And such was indeed the case. Literature was for us the *means*, not the end. The alteration of a few words here and there would suffice to transform the writings of that period into an incessant appeal to the youth of Italy to create a country for themselves by force of arms.

And it is well to recall the fact that we were the

first to write in such wise. By our bold and fervid style—rather directed to the object of rousing the torpid faculties of Italian youth, than to the enunciation of a positive philosophy—we were the first to alarm our governments, and thus to prove the impossibility of intellectual emancipation and free progress, on any other condition than that of first freeing our enslaved and divided country.

The suppression of the *Indicatore Genovese*, the *Indicatore Livornese*, and the *Antologia* of Florence, was an important political fact, which drove the majority of our literary youth into the revolutionary ranks.

Until then, *Romanticism* had dragged itself through many an ignoble compromise, along the path of purely objective art, or lingered in the field of the past—choosing a past less remote than that of the *Classical* school, but none the less past for ever. The *Romanticists* of that day devoted themselves to prayer or description. The terror inspired by the Austrian condemnations which had struck the greatest among the contributors to the *Conciliatore*, yet hung over them; and Arici, Borghi, Mamiani, Biava, Mauri, and I know not how many others, inundated Italy with hymns to the virgin and saints, or versions of the

psalmists, amongst whom they were careful to avoid those revolutionists of Israel, the Prophets. Cesare Cantù hesitated between Guelphism and the Empire. The best among them busied themselves with imitations of the forms and externals of northern art. None declared that *Romanticism* in Italy was the struggle for liberty against oppression, the battle of independence fought in the name of our own individual inspiration and the collective Thought of our country, against all forms and rules not of our own choice.

We did declare this. And this is the sole merit of these writings.

But in making this declaration, we intended to proclaim a truth not only political, but literary.

Truth is one, and governs every manifestation of life. Every stage of the education of humanity, or of a single nation, is presided over and directed by a social Thought, expressing and representing the degree of progress in course of achievement.

Religion, art, politics, and industry, all express and promote this thought, in methods varying according to their special mission, and the elements over which their influence extends.

Genius—the spirit gifted with exceptional power

—may either sum up the past, or prophesy the future; but the collective literature, the Art of one or of many nations, is inspired and informed solely by the immediate social *aim* of the epoch.

The special aim of art is to excite mankind to reduce *thought* to *action.* Some of the articles published in the present edition treat of this, the sole true definition of art, at greater length. Meanwhile, now that the rising of our nation appears to promise a revival of Italian art, it is well to state it here, and refer all who are doubtful on the subject to history.

Philosophy, since its earliest existence, has almost always been the repository of the ruling Thought of its epoch. But that Thought, while confined to the regions of philosophy, is unfruitful; the object of mere individual contemplation, it is incapable of modifying social life, unable to incarnate itself in, and direct the action of mankind.

Religion seizes upon that Thought, relinks it to heaven, gives it the consecration of a divine origin and of a future; then, setting it on high as the supreme law and aim of human action, transforms the world through it.

The ministry of art is similar. Art seizes upon the idea lying inactive in the mind, to instil it into the

heart, confides it to the affections, and converts it into a passion which transforms man from a thinker into an apostle.

I do not mean that art, as it is understood by unfaithful men at the present day, fulfils this mission. I mean that it ought to be such, that it was such in each great epoch of its existence, and that it has declined, and become degraded into the mere amusement of the idle, and the parody of its true self, whenever it has departed from that aim.

The highest condition of art is when it interrogates the Thought of the epoch in the nation and in humanity, translates it in symbols and images, and clothes it in forms that stimulate the heart, the fancy, and the affections, to make it a part of their own life, and ensure its triumph.

The Thought of the epoch in our nation is the creation of an Italy, great and free, and destined to raise on high the banner of the oppressed and nameless peoples, to call them to unity and spontaneity of life, and aid them both by action and example.

And the Thought of the epoch in humanity—whatever appearances may say to the contrary—is a religious transformation. We have to fulfil the solemn obsequies of a faith which, for reasons it were long to

detail, no longer makes fruitful the life of man; and to summon hearts now hesitating, sceptical, disheartened, and divided, to rebaptism in faith, goodwill, and brotherhood, around the cradle of a new religion.

A new heaven and a new earth.—Is this a narrow field for the future art of Italy? Is it less poetical than the art of individual sensation and caprice, in the pursuit of which so many powerful minds have withered before they have reached half-way upon the path of life, like Alfred de Musset?

Will the fact that the manifestations of this new art are destined to be principally religious and political, that it will faithfully pursue a pre-ordained collective aim, cause it to falsify the very conditions of its own life or violate its own confines? Will art be less sublime when led by the column of fire that guided the Israelites across the desert, instead of the *ignis fatuus* that misleads the traveller by its dancing light?

There are two errors that threaten art:—the theory that it is an imitation of nature, and the theory that would make self-worship its ruling law, and has created the formula of *art for art's sake.* The first would deprive it of all spontaneous individual life; the second breaks the link that binds it to the universe, and leaves it to wander like a sick man's dream, guided by no

law, destitute of all mission or aim, at the bidding of every new sensation. The first theory renders art useless, the second dangerous; both condemn it to sterility.

Art does not imitate but interpret. It searches out the idea lying dormant in the symbol, in order to present the symbol to men in such form as to enable them to penetrate through it to the idea. Were it otherwise, what would be the use or value of art?

Nature is for art the garb of the Eternal. The *real* is the finite expression and representation of the true; *forms* are the limits affixed by time and space to the power of life. Nature, reality, and form, should, all of them, be so rendered and expressed by art, as to reveal to mankind some ray of the truth—a vaster and profounder sentiment of life.

The opposite theory reduces the poet to a level with the photographer.

Art is not the fancy or caprice of an individual. It is the mighty voice of God and the universe, as heard by the chosen spirit, and repeated in tones of harmony to mankind.

Should that omnipotent voice strike too directly upon the mortal ear, it would stun and suspend all

human action, even as Pantheism crushed the ancient Oriental world.

Art is no isolated, unconnected, or inexplicable phenomenon. It draws its life from the life of the universe, and with the universe it ascends from epoch to epoch towards the Almighty. It owes its power over the souls of men to that collective life—even as the trees and plants draw their life from earth, the common mother; and its power would be destroyed should it attempt to forsake its source.

The artistic formula, *art for art's sake*, is as atheistic as the political formula, *each for himself*, which may for a few years rule the actions of a people in decline, but can never guide a people arising to new life, and destined to fulfil a great mission.

The youthful student of art in Italy—when Italy exists, for until then all art amongst us should be a battle-hymn—will, I hope, avoid these two errors. They will not forget our great men who, from Dante to Foscolo, have taught us that art is a moral priesthood.

Whether ill or well, the writings that follow taught the same doctrine thirty years ago.

JOSEPH MAZZINI, 1861.

TRANSLATOR'S PREFATORY NOTE.

IN his Preface to the Italian Edition of his Literary Works, Mazzini says that had he been the compiler of that edition, he should have omitted the extremely juvenile articles of which one-third of the first volume is composed, and have begun the volume with the article "*Upon an European Literature.*"

This plan has therefore been adopted in the present edition. One exception has, however, been made, by the insertion of the extract from the review of Giannoni's poem "*The Exile,*" which is rendered peculiarly touching and interesting by the fact, that it was written at a time when it was impossible the young writer should foresee that he was describing the terrible destiny of his own future.

Life & Writings of Joseph Mazzini

VOL II.—CRITICAL & LITERARY.

FROM A REVIEW OF GIANNONI'S POEM, "THE EXILE."

(From the *Indicatore Livornese*, 1829.)

. . . . . .

. . . EXILE!—He who first devised this punishment had neither father, mother, friend, nor lover. He sought to revenge himself on his fellow-men by saying to them :—*Be you accursed in exile, as I have been by nature! You shall be orphans, and die the death of the soul. I take from you father, mother, lover, and country, all but the breath of life; so that you may wander like Cain throughout the universe, and the iron of despair may enter your souls.*

The malediction was accomplished. The curse is working now upon thousands who have provoked it even as Prometheus provoked the vengeance of Jove. And the human justice that pronounces this curse utters it as if it were a benefit to one whom it might deprive of existence.

But if they who weigh so lightly those affections which are the life of life could number the pulsations of the heart thus torn from its country, the sighs of an existence thus left without a present and without

a future, and concentrated in memory alone;—could they hear the cry of solitude that bursts from the depths of the exile's soul when the memory of all he has lost—the image of his loving mother, the faces of his fellow-citizens, and the form of the virgin of his love, pass like mocking phantoms before him;—could they read the dark thoughts that pass like storm-clouds over his spirit, until its divine ray is obscured by a multitude of wild and disordered visions; the anguish of despair that poisons the springs of life, and the fever that undermines it,—they would surely pause ere they doomed their fellow-man to the curse of the fratricide.* Tremendous is the power society arrogates to itself when it effaces from the book of life a name inscribed therein by the finger of God, and consigns His work to the executioner. But life is a mystery which the living comprehend not; the dread of destruction, by stupifying the faculties, may lessen the grief, and one blow of the axe cuts short every desire, affection, hope, or terror; but the exile, throughout his torture of a thousand hours, lives—lives in all the energy of his strength, in all the fulness of his sensibilities, and no shaft of sorrow's quiver is spared to him. From the utterance of that fatal word, he wanders through the world like a rudderless ship upon the ocean, without idea or aim; driven hither and thither by the winds and waves of chance.

He wanders over many lands, passes through

* Vagus et profugus eris super terram.—*Liber Genesis.*

many cities, among men of many climes; ever a stranger to their hopes and joy. His soul is full of love, for he is of the land of Raffaelle and Torquato, where the first breath of infancy and the sigh of love are one; his lips are moved to smiles,—God send us tears rather than such smiles—meaningless, joyless, fleeting, and chill as the shudder that convulses the dying. His hand clasps the hands of other men, for his heart is open to benevolence and gratitude; but in that heart is a void—a void that naught can fill, naught but the fatherland.

How often does he watch the clouds moving onwards towards his country, while the silent tears steal over his cheek, to think they will sweep across her heavenly sky. How often has he invoked death, murmuring, *Hast thou forgotten me?* but the very tomb is doubly cold when a foreign soil covers the dead within, and death, who appears like an angel of glory on the battle-field, and often like an angel of consolation to those who expire in the arms of their kindred, glares like a hideous skeleton, darkening the pillow of him who expires in a foreign land.

Ah, bitter is exile to him on whom nature has bestowed a heart formed to feel the blessings of a country!

OF AN EUROPEAN LITERATURE.

(From the *Antologia* of Florence, Nos. 7, 8, November and December 1829.)

"I foresee the dawn of an European literature which no single people may claim as their own, for all of them will have contributed to its foundation."—GÖTHE.

THE obscurest sayings of the truly great are often those which contain the germ of the profoundest and most useful truths. Genius rapidly traverses the living present to bury itself in the deepest mysteries of the universe; often making the grandest discoveries at a single glance. To one informed by this sublime instinct the laws which govern the lives of nations are revealed; the past and present interpret and explain each other, and not unfrequently disclose the future; for genius is prophetic.

But, owing to the intensity of his convictions, his passionate attachment to his own ideas, and his constant self-concentration, the man of genius is often unmindful or incapable of measuring the intellect of other men, and he therefore expresses himself in strange and daring fashion, or in brief and energetic symbols, and is regarded as wild or obscure by those

who are either unwilling or unable to penetrate his meaning.

. . . . . .

[Mazzini here warns the reader against the vulgar error of treating the previsions of genius as dreams, and asserts that it is now evident to all, that new circumstances, new beliefs, desires, and customs, have created a want of the European literature foretold by Göthe; a literature which shall be the true expression of the conditions and aims of modern civilisation. All Europe, he says, appears to be inspired with a breath of new life, a spirit of literary innovation, urging intelligence upon paths yet unexplored, and proving the actual insufficiency of the antique rules and models.

He then proceeds to examine the progress already made, and the present state of European civilization, in order to determine what will be the essential characteristics required to render the new literature a complete representation of the wants, aspirations, relations, and affections of the peoples in this nineteenth century.]

. . . . . .

One of the fundamental characteristics of this literature I believe to be indicated by the words of Göthe, quoted at the head of the present article. Those words contain a deep meaning, and are the result of a profound consideration of the silent progressive work of ages, and they establish—as it seems

to me—the essential difference between ancient and modern literature.

I am aware that to many the words European literature appear to imply the destruction of all spirit of nationality, and of all individual character among the peoples; while others regard them as the expression of a wild and Utopian dream. The first confound the idea of a nation's independence with its intellectual isolation, which is an error of judgment; the second despair alike of things and men—an error of the heart.

. . . . . .

A glance over the history of the vicissitudes of literature among the various peoples into which the human race is divided, will at once reveal so great a diversity of method, of conception, and of style, as apparently to indicate a special character, and a peculiar and distinct tendency in the genius of different nations, as if Nature, when assigning the boundaries of rivers and mountains as limits to individual ambition, had also intended to mark out the intellectual frontier of each.

Whence this diversity? Are the causes in which it originates immutable, and their consequences therefore eternal, or are they subject to successive modification, and destined ultimately to be destroyed?

It will be evident that upon the answer to this question depends the possibility of the creation of an European literature.

In the days when literature—misguided by academic

pretensions, withered by arcadian formalities, and corrupted by protection—had lost even the memory of its ancient dignity and its early mission, literary men were accustomed to regard their art rather as a means of flattering the ear of the powerful few, than as an useful ministry among the multitude. They occupied themselves with the externals, not the substance of things; with the graces of expression, not the value of the ideas expressed.

. . . .

The power of creation being denied them, they recited the glories of ages gone by, and busied themselves with commentaries, biographies, and histories of literature.

But the hidden link which does in fact connect the progress and character of literature with that of civil and political life, remained unsuspected by the monks, librarians, and court *literati* by whom these works were compiled, and for that reason their books were rather memoirs of individuals than histories of the intellectual vicissitudes of the peoples; and all their immense erudition, unillumined by any philosophical idea, did but result in an accumulation of names and information, as lifeless and barren as the headstones of a cemetery.

The diversity which they recognised in the intellectual development of each nation, and the special and peculiar characteristics distinguishing their separate literature, were considered by them as facts conclusive against the existence of a primary and

universal standard of taste. The problem was one to be solved only by the aid of history and philosophy, and since neither their own intelligence, nor the times in which they lived, allowed them to enter deeply into these more liberal studies, they went astray in search of a sole and immutable cause. Deceived by outward semblances, and seduced by the authority of the ancients and the systems of political writers—who attributed a capacity for independence, or a necessity of servitude to the peoples according to the degree of aptitude or intelligence they supposed them to possess—they declared that nature had confined intellect within certain laws corresponding to its topographical position, and pronounced climate to be the primary and supreme regulator of taste. Hence the idea of the essential diversity and special and immutable character of the literature of each different nation—an idea most injurious in its consequences, because tending, like all such theories, to restrain and depress genius, even when conscious of its creative faculty.

At length, through the action of that spirit which urges the human race towards higher destinies, the phantom of authority gave place to the sentiment of independence. Equality of rights, and the capacity of exercising them, were conceded to men of every zone, although their community of ideas and emotions was still denied. The laws of one state were ameliorated by rules and examples derived from another; the habits and customs of different nations became an

object of study, many old opinions fell into oblivion, many prejudices disappeared, but yet this prejudice of the absolute influence of climate upon genius and literature remained; perpetuated by the suffrage of mediocrity, in its nature inert, by the ravings of national vanity, and by the jargon of the endless tribe of pedants. Even now, we constantly hear it repeated and uttered as a sort of anathema upon all who seek to enlarge the sphere of taste; while every attempt to open up new paths to literary intelligence, and every exhortation to the Italians to study the masterworks of other nations, is opposed and met by dulcet phrases about *our classic soil* and *the Italian sky*; phrases too readily accepted as an answer by those whose patriotism is satisfied with words alone.

But facts were opposed to this theory; facts which in matters of opinion constitute the sole supreme unanswerable authority; and which neither acuteness of rhetoric nor pertinacity of system can overthrow.

If I open the history of the various literatures of different nations, I observe an alternation of glory and decay, of reciprocal influence, of transfusion from one to another, as well as a continual mutability of taste, now national, now servile, now corrupt. The literature of no country is so entirely original as to have received no intermixture of foreign elements, either through tradition in its early days, or through conquest at a later date.

No people ever possessed a law of taste so firmly established as to remain unchanged throughout the

progress of ages; because taste, though elevated by many into an immutable abstraction, is, in fact, the result of education,* and represents the degree of civilisation to which a given people has attained.

Italian literature in its early days bore the stamp of the laws of taste communicated by the Arabs to the south of Europe. It was Platonic, mystic, and idealist in one age, and materialist in another; severe, national, and independent at one period, and again servilely imitative; then impotent and lascivious—the amusement of the idle, and the flatterer of the strong. Yet the same Italian sky diffused the enchantment of its eternal smile over the soul of the Trovatori and of Guinicelli, in the days of Dante, and in those of the *Cicalate*.

The literature of Spain, resplendent for five hundred years with the tropes and images of the East, became, for a long period—commencing with Juan II.—a mere imitation of the Italian, in consequence of the study of Dante, promoted by Villena Santilana and Mena, and the imitations of Petrarch, introduced at a later date by Garcilasso and Boscano. Yet the sun that shone upon Spain in the time of Charles V. was the same that illumined the turrets of the Alhambra when Grenada was the seat of Moorish dominion.

The climate of England is dark and cold; its spring without brightness, and its autumn without

* It is scarcely necessary to say that the word education is here applied in its widest sense, as the result of the civil, political, and religious teachings which hasten or impede the progress of nations.

luxuriance. Nevertheless, upon English soil, and among the mists of Scotland, arose the poetry most redundant in descriptive power; and for the last thirty years no country has produced poets who have understood the language of solitude, and transfused the very soul of nature into their verse, like Burns, Crabbe, Wordsworth, etc.

The metaphorical sublimity distinguishing eastern writers has been attributed to the splendour of their clime; yet the same characteristic marks the poems of Macpherson, and the collected works of Scandinavian authors given to the world by Mallet. The character of profound meditation, and the leaning towards the abstract, manifested by northern Europeans, was attributed to their cold climate; but later studies and investigations have revealed a similar spirit of contemplation and ideality in the religious systems and beliefs of the East, especially of India. And how numerous are the points of resemblance between Homer, Ossian, and the Biblical writers! The tree of knowledge has struck root, now in burning Egypt, and now amid the snows of Iceland, with the same indifference to climate that caused it to flourish in Attica, while it avoided the neighbouring Boetia. How great is the resemblance between the national songs of Corsica and Scotland, and the love-songs of Persia, Italy, and Arabia; and how wide the diversity between the spirit that informs the literature of ancient Greece, and the songs of vengeance and liberty sung by the modern Klephts!

I have chosen these examples at random; but it is clear that these resemblances and varieties, so remarkable in the literature of different nations, are too numerous to be satisfactorily accounted for by climate alone.

What, then, are the true causes influencing the condition of letters in each nation, and how are we to explain this apparent singularity?

It may be asserted as a principle, that the attempt to seek the causes of the character and progress of a nation's literature, otherwhere than in the history of that nation, is to wander in pursuit of a phantom. In the life of peoples, as of individuals, everything is successive and connected.

When literature is the spontaneous and free issue of the universal mind of a people, it expresses and represents their degree of moral civilisation; when it is corrupt and enslaved, it is the representation of their political condition. It is, as Shakespeare calls it, the mirror of the times. Therefore, the study of the times is the sole means of clearing away the mist that occasionally envelops the history of literature, and the study of the institutions of a people can alone explain the origin of their special standard of taste. The climate of Athens and Sparta was the same; yet their different institutions created a literature in the first, and denied it to the last. The allegorical genius of the East was produced by its institutions, under which no revelation of the truth undisguised by the veil of emblem might be made with impunity. The

simple and uniform institutions of Switzerland have given a character of simplicity, directness, and utility to her literature, although the inequalities of her climate are so great that the traveller may pass almost from the heats of Senegal to the snows of Spitzberg.

Love is, perhaps, the only affection over which the institutions of the country exercise little or no influence; for he who truly feels that passion is elevated above all ordinary human interests, and transported into a world inhabited by two beings alone. Hence the expression of this affection is, to a certain extent, both unique and universal; the love-songs of Italy, Persia, and Arabia, at times appear as if inspired by the selfsame genius beneath the selfsame heaven; and yet, so omnipotent are the institutions of the country, that here in Italy, for example, we find the holy and pure sentiment of the 13th and 14th centuries transformed at a later period into the lust of the satyr or the affectation of the mere seeker after poetic conceits,—for true love cannot dwell in the heart of the slave.

The diversity existing between the literature of the North and that of the South has really the aspect of a fundamental and lasting distinction, decreed by nature. An intimate comprehension and profound analysis of the beautiful appears to be the gift of the races of the North, even as a lively and instructive *sentiment* of the beautiful appears inborn in the races of the South. The works of the North bear a stronger

stamp of originality, and reveal a constant leaning towards the abstract and ideal.

Not only, however, is this distinction gradually passing away, but even here much may be attributed to the influence of different institutions and of outward circumstances.

All intercourse between the North and East was formerly but slight and brief, and the causes that withheld the Northern peoples from becoming intimately acquainted with an ancient literature so perfect in its external form, enabled them at a later period to create one more original from their native elements.

The Reformation, by exciting to subtle disquisition, produced a necessity for serious and patient study, which greatly encouraged the Northern disposition to ponder the various aspects of things, and generated a spirit of meditation, long employed upon matters of religious controversy, but afterwards addressed to subjects of literature and the fine arts.

The great powers of reflection thus created would, of necessity, produce noble results; but as the political institutions of the North prevented their application to great national interests and realities, the human intellect, thrown back and concentrated upon itself, became passionately absorbed in systems and abstractions, and, restrained from all useful exertion in the active and positive sphere, took refuge amid ideal objects and relations, and worshipped its own imaginings.

The result was a literature, wild, and to all appearance unregulated in form, but vast and profound in inward substance; a poetry, psychological and entirely *subjective* in its nature, rather looking towards the future than interpreting the present; wandering upon the borders of an unknown world; melancholy and affecting as a hope undefined. England, on the contrary, is perhaps, of all countries, the one in which the greatest homage is paid to the actual and positive. Her institutions open a wide field for the exercise of intelligence, and all the elements of which her national prosperity is composed are free ground for the action of intellect.

Commerce, industry, and agriculture, the three bases upon which English greatness reposes, incline the mind to the study of the real; and the importance the English naturally and rightly assign to the present prevents any strong desire to throw themselves upon the future.

For all these reasons, the literature of England is —speaking generally—entirely positive in its character; historic, and treating of facts; and her poetry is all made up of feeling and description. . . .

Thus is the character of every literature determined by the institutions of the country, and the existing diversity is but the natural result of those civil and political conditions which excite or depress, promote or restrain intelligence.

I do but briefly sketch, as far as my space and powers allow, subjects which require to be broadly

developed; but when literary research is carried out in the direction I have indicated, the result will render yet more evident the truth of the assertion, that the laws and literature of a people invariably advance upon two parallel lines.

As for us Italians, our political institutions—now ferocious, now corrupt; sometimes impotent, often tyrannical, and never in accordance with the will of the majority—have produced a poetry, lovely and harmonious in form, and brilliant in colour and fancy, but almost always frivolous and effeminate, and in no way appealing to the higher faculties of the mind. Our literature—now learned, now academic, and now courtly—though erudite, elegant, and pleasing, has never yet been either useful or national, if we except the works of some of our historians and philosophers, and those few poets whose genius towers above the ages.

Nevertheless, with a tenacity worthy a better cause, we persist in rallying round a Palladium incapable of saving us from ruin, and in opposing the cry of *patriotism* to those who strive to arouse us to our ancient intellectual vigour. O Italians! it is well to defend our national honour and our past glories; but national honour is better guarded by overcoming our defects than by boasting of our gifts, and the best safeguard for our past glories would be the achievement of new.

Our fathers have done great deeds; but until we remember that time, by developing new rights, invari-

ably creates new duties, and so long as we content ourselves with worshipping their sepulchres, so long will Italy—once the first among nations—remain behind; for the palm of intellect can be maintained neither by sun nor sky. . . . . .

During the earliest periods of civilisation, while a people is yet in its infancy, or little more, its progress is directed by the few in whom intellect and energy are combined; the multitude, ignorant and inert, is satisfied with accepting the benefit conferred. Literature, unfortified by the action of the general mind, pourtrays the positive and material aspect of society, rather than identifies itself with its moral tendency; it copies rather than creates, and follows the course of civilisation, manifesting and representing the degree already reached; but it neither precedes it, nor develops the germs of its future advance.

In such periods the institutions of a country are the sole dominant power, and impress upon literature the special characteristics and local peculiarities of which we have spoken above. But when civilisation has so far advanced that the period of its origin is already regarded as antique, the power of institutions is no longer so absolute. The number of those desirous of seeing and judging for themselves is increased, and, through the agreement of the observations and judgments of the generality, the power of public opinion is gradually raised upon the ruins of authority.

When the weight of public opinion thus counterbalances the effect of the institutions of a people, the

advance of civilisation is more rapid and secure. Slowly and cautiously formed, strong in infinity of means, pure in intention, and based on justice and the times, public opinion may be restrained, mocked, or repressed: destroyed it cannot be, and sooner or later its arbitration is supreme.

When society has reached this point the office of literature is changed. Where once it merely followed and expressed, it now precedes and foretells. It is the business of the writer to study the wants of his nation, to interrogate and penetrate the hearts of his fellowmen, and to reveal their soul's aspiration, purified from every stain or baseness acquired in its human relations. Thus constituted interpreter of the common Thought, the writer foresees and lends his aid in all great social transformations, so that it sometimes appears as if he had created events, when in fact he but matured them, and removed the obstacles in their way. If, therefore, certain uniform mental characteristics exist which are common to all the nations of Europe, if civilisation is undoubtedly bringing them together, if the power of opinion does gradually weaken and will destroy all national antipathies, and the nations do invoke and desire that fraternity which will be the result of their decay—it matters little that adverse laws, or the caprice or interest of the few, persist in the endeavour to keep them apart; the purpose and duty of literature is none the less decided. Its mission is to seize hold of this tendency in the peoples, in order to direct and

improve it, for it is the result of a progress which is the work of ages, and cannot recede. Those institutions (affecting but the surface of things, and not identified with the elements of human happiness) which are contrary to opinion, the ruler of the world, will but remain as anomalies in the progress of civilisation until time and the force of things sweep away the feeble remnant of their existence.

And are we now in this nineteenth century under the influence of certain causes urging us all through similar paths towards one and the same goal? Is our moral position such that its true manifestation and expression must be unique over the whole of Europe?

A brief review of European civilisation may perhaps lead us to this conclusion.

It is only through obscure allegories and uncertain traditions that we learn the first steps made by the species towards social life during the long period known to us as the heroic ages. Hesitating between the ferocious isolation in which they had lived and the new order of things, men first gathered together in groups. They were led by chiefs, and possessed the elements of religion, but of true civilisation there was as yet none. Physical force was the ruling power, physical force or chance decided their choice of leaders, the maintenance or destruction of whose sway was left to fortune.

The great struggle between good and evil, between the germs of intellectual development and the impulses of blind unregulated physical nature, was

manifested by the formation of laws approved by the majority, though frequently irrational; in their simple though barbarous customs, and in their wars, unjustly undertaken and ferociously conducted; the struggle afterwise symbolised in Oro and Trifone, Ormuzd and Ahriman, Jupiter and the Titans.

Meanwhile, the first stirrings of the human soul towards a better future are to be traced in their rare lyrics and warlike songs; but no true literature as yet existed. And yet, from the poets and historians, who are our only representatives of that period, we learn enough to convince us that the early days of all nations were similar, and the spectacle presented by the human mind in its first struggles with barbarism alike in every clime. The absence and the extreme of civilisation are alike in this: they destroy all evidence of individual character among the peoples.

Hence, the same few primitive ideas form the basis of all the most ancient mythologies; hence the similarity in the origin and formation of different nations, and the resemblance between the aphorisms and sayings of the gnomic poets of Greece and the mythical proverbs of the Indians.

The struggle ceased. The elements of the social world were assimilated; the peoples now possessed cities, laws, religions, and social customs; but unequal, and regulated by the special passions or particular dispositions of those elevated by genius or cunning into the position of lawgivers. The simple and primitive type impressed by nature upon the countenances

of all her children underwent various modifications, and the physiognomy assumed by the human tribes became as distinct as their institutions.

The seeds of intellectual civilisation were carried from Asia into Europe, but rendered sterile in some spots by tyrannical laws and the jealousies of caste; while in others they were scattered by constant wars and invasions, so that their free development was impossible. Greece, however, many of whose islands were contiguous to the Eastern world, isolated, and protected from foreign invasion by her mountains and her sea, gathered up and cultivated the germs brought from the East; and it was upon her soil that the majestic tree, destined to spread its branches over the whole of Europe, struck root.

Greece represents the first period of civilisation,* and the literature which is the interpreter of that period arose simultaneously; purely Greek and local in character, and bearing the impress of the Greek climate, Greek customs, and Greek sense of superiority. And indeed, under the influence of wise and energetic institutions, Greece did rapidly reach a point which, in many respects, is still worthy of our envy. But the higher the eminence to which she rose, the greater the distance she placed between herself and other nations.

* I speak here of the civilisation represented by literature. Italian civilisation was *probably* anterior, *certainly* coeval with the Greek, but it has left no monument either of art or literature behind. And the ancient Eastern world (but little known at the date of this article), with the exception of its two great religious epopees, possessed no literature, properly so called, anterior to the Greek epoch. Sakoontala cannot be dated farther back than two thousand years.—(1861.)

An oasis in the desert, she regarded the European nations lying around her with contempt, scornfully stigmatising them as barbarians.

However, the first period of civilisation can never be a period of diffusion. The edifice requires to be secured and established before it can be extended, and Greece, being frequently obliged to shed her blood in defence of her independence, could do no more than preserve the fruits of her own moral progress; she did not enlarge its sphere, save in the case of the few colonies which carried much of her civilisation to Sicily and the shores of this Italy, within whose bosom slept the destinies of the world.

Love of country was the characteristic of the age—an exclusive affection concentrated within the walls of the city where the Greek first beheld the light, and associated with the surrounding nature, soil, rocks, water, and sky. The man born beyond that circle was deemed unworthy of aught but a life of slavery. This potent individualism was naturally reflected by literature. In subject, form, style, and ornament, it was wholly and solely Greek. The poet, blessed with a country the envy of mankind, had no inducement to create a wider sphere for himself; he was not a man inspired by nature to reveal to mortals an universal truth; he was a Greek, seeking to immortalise his country's glories, and to educate her sons in veneration of the laws and religion of their ancestors. He looked to the land he trod for his subject, and to the heaven that smiled above her for his beauties of

colour and form. Hence the rarity of any profound or general idea in his poems, of any truly moral conception or trait descriptive of an affection common to all mankind. The chord of humanity was mute upon the Greek lyre. In the moral as well as in the physical world there is a constant tendency towards an equilibrium of parts. A nation whose fate it has been to live and progress apart, and whose civilisation has no wider basis than that included within its own frontiers, cannot long exist, because the immense inequality between it and the surrounding peoples gives rise to a permanent state of war between might and right, between the moral progress of the one and the inert barbarism of the many;—a war that is destined to endure until the civilised nation diffuse the benefit of her institutions, or succumb.

And Greece did succumb. While internal dissensions, civil corruption, and the multiplicity of her philosophical sects, were weakening the power of Greece, a huge colossus had arisen in the West—Rome, the representative of active power, arose. The boundless patriotism and eminently warlike nature of her population, as well as her infamous policy, contributed to raise a throne whose apex was the Capitol, whose base covered the whole south of Europe.

Greece was unable alone to maintain herself against the Roman world. She fell; and with her independence fell the flower of Grecian genius. But the fruit remained. Nations, like individuals, live and die; but civilisation cannot die. It gained in exten-

sion what it lost in height and splendour. Like a liquid flowing in all directions from a broken vase, Grecian learning, flowing from the centre, diffused itself on every side. The miracles of Greek art were carried over all Italy by the rapacity of her conquerors, and Greek philosophy, politics, and literature, were propagated by numbers of her sons who were driven by violence, abhorrence of servitude, or cowardice, to abandon their country.

The broad distinctions between the East and West were confused beneath the iron sceptre of Rome, and the different populations, bending under the same yoke and submitted to the same influences and vicissitudes, experienced similar effects, and were drawn together by identity of suffering, aspiration, and position. Even religious distinctions began to disappear. Many creeds already presented important points of resemblance in their fundamental principles, especially in those countries where the religious power was limited to dominion over conscience, and was subservient to the political power. Those religions, which, as in Gaul and elsewhere, had created a powerful theocracy, uniting the office of ruler and priest in their ministers, were either persecuted or destroyed by the Romans.

In the meantime, while the multitudes were thus unconsciously being prepared for uniformity of religious faith, numerous philosophical sects, alike in some respects, but distinct in others, sowed the seeds

of that *eclecticism* destined to become one of the characteristics of the European world.

And the impress of this uniform tendency and general progress would undoubtedly have been stamped upon the literature of the period, had not civil dissensions, the unrestrained lust of conquest, a constant succession of wars and perils, the suspicions of tyranny and the action of a military government, all combined to prevent the Romans from creating a truly free and national literature. The dignity of their manners and customs, their almost perfect language, and their active and enterprising character, seem fitted to promote the formation of such a literature; but there was not—so to speak—time to create it from the elements of that epoch, and when at length a favourable period of tranquillity arrived, oppression interfered to prevent intelligence from investigating the wants and wishes of the peoples composing that vast empire.

The literature of Rome therefore, unable to assume a popular form, was given over to servile imitation. Its mythology, precepts, forms, and even subjects, were frequently borrowed from the Greeks, from whom it acquired simplicity rather than dramatic power or variety, beauty of expression rather than depth of thought.

Roman literature—of foreign growth—shone with a brilliancy not its own; like a plant transplanted from a foreign clime, it put forth its blossoms, but produced no fruit; it was beautiful but useless, and

quickly deteriorated. The protection of some of the princes appeared to elevate it for a time, but it was like the embrace of Hercules, raising Antæus but to dash him to the earth. The flame burned brightly, but was quickly extinguished. Here and there a solitary genius arose to scale the heavens, but with the great soul of Tacitus the spirit of Roman genius departed.

Yet, if we compare Roman and Greek literature, we find that the sphere of poetry is somewhat enlarged. The Latin systems of religion reveal a nearer approach towards unity, and the passions are represented by Latin authors under a moral rather than physical aspect. Love, as described by Virgil, is a passionate aspiration of the soul, not a mere sensual feeling; and the tinge of melancholy which colours his verse seems the offspring of meditation upon human destiny. The chords of the heart are more frequently touched, and one feels that a step has been taken towards the revelation of the inner man.

This sublime revelation was first given by Christianity. Ideas had previously been multiplied in number. Once few and simple, they now tended towards the complex, universal, and abstract. The relations of sympathy were also multiplied between man and man; they learned to understand and to love one another. The moral aspect of existence was more and more revealed by civilisation, and men began to suspect the existence of certain sacred and inviolable rights in the human race, independent of

birth or local circumstance, and to have an indistinct prevision of the mission of man.

Meanwhile, the existing religions, creations of civilisation in its dawn, no longer satisfied or kept pace with the growing development of mankind. The offspring, for the most part, of fear or political cunning, symbolical of material agencies, and strange and obscure in their rites, they appealed, without exception, to the senses, though in language varying, as the physical wants of man varied, according to climate.

A religion became necessary which, by addressing man from a higher sphere, should supply the novel wants and respond to the novel aspirations of his moral faculties. Hence, while the scepticism, incredulity, and contempt which characterise the writers of this period, operated to undermine all ancient creeds and beliefs, thoughtful minds were dimly conscious of one prominent idea and sole conception, to be traced in each and all, however great their diversity of form; and this perception prepared the minds of men for a great moral revolution.

Christianity appeared. Interpreter of the inward aspirations of the peoples, and true expression of the hidden mysteries of the soul, Christianity—considered in its substance—may be said to have concluded the second epoch of civilisation, by formulating and promulgating its vast results in a few sublime principles. Viewing man, not as the deformed creature circumstances and evil institutions had made him, but from the height of his primitive nature, it addressed all

mankind as brothers, uttering words of peace and love to all, and declaring the moral equality of all. Fraternity and love were inscribed upon the banner elevated by Christianity in the midst of the human tribes, and its appearance was the signal for the abolition of slavery, and the commencement of an era during which the nations rallied one after another round the Cross, and advanced in harmony and goodwill upon the path of indefinite progress. Christianity tempered the exclusiveness of patriotism, laid the foundations of universal justice, and created that spirit of proselytism, that ardent desire of preaching and promulgating truth, which raised up in after days so many defenders of the sacred cause of humanity and right.

But one-half of Europe remained uninfluenced by the progress of the southern peoples. The northern races, still idolators of force, roamed their forests amid the darkness of ignorance, ungoverned by any regular laws. The South had learned to aspire towards a higher degree of civilisation, but—as if exhausted by the religious triumph achieved—lacked the energy to maintain it. And indeed, if to the newly-acquired sentiment of the rights of man had been added vigour and determination in their defence, a lasting barrier might have been raised between the destinies of the North and South, for the distinction between them would have become too great to be overcome.

But curiosity and suffering, two inseparable companions of the human race, interfered to prevent this.

The Northern tribes, urged on by desire of change and the need of lands more fertile than their own, poured in torrents over their frontiers, and precipitated themselves upon the Southern peoples. The struggle which had formerly existed between the East and West was now renewed between the North and South, but more destructive and tremendous, because the disparity between the belligerents was greater.

Christianity had sown the seeds of immense benefits among mankind, but it was impossible that so complete a religious transformation should take place, in a society where pagan manners, customs, and habits of thought still prevailed, without undermining the whole social edifice, and destroying all equilibrium of power among nations.

The first material consequences of the change appeared to be fatal to the State. It was as a torrent that fertilises distant lands at the expense of that where it breaks forth. Rome had lost the antique faith that once guided her heroes to battle, and was incapable of deriving any advantage from the new. The old was as a branch from a withered trunk, and the new had not, as yet, struck root in men's hearts. Moreover, the Romans were divided by slavery, corrupted by luxury, and mentally impoverished by the multiplicity of sects which had issued from the decay of their past religion. They occupied themselves with puerile disputes and theological subtleties, and despised their invaders as barbarians. But these barbarians were at least brave and warlike, while they

had neither the power of civilisation nor the energy of barbarism. The very nerve of the empire was destroyed, and it was utterly unable to resist the Northern eruptions, which succeeded one another like the waves of the sea.

The colossus was overthrown. Hordes of Goths, Visigoths, Huns, and Vandals, swept over Italy, Gaul, and Spain, by turns. Language, institutions, customs, all disappeared, whelmed beneath the devastating flood. A hundred different races were confused and clashed together; a hundred different elements, civil and barbaric, struggled for mastery; the moral universe presented an image of chaos; the sun of civilisation appeared extinguished, and the European world buried for ever in darkness.

But not for ever. Within that chaos the elements of life and progress were silently fermenting, and civilisation, though apparently destroyed, was in fact preparing to regain the equilibrium it had lost. Overthrown and scattered in the South, it was insensibly acting upon the North, and revenging itself on those who had trampled it under foot by tempering the barbarism of their nature and customs. While the mass of the barbarians for a time overwhelmed the conquered beneath their own ignorance and superstition, throwing intelligence back into the narrow material sphere it had lately abandoned, those among them who returned to their homes, and the Roman slaves who accompanied them, introduced Southern manners and customs into their native land; and Christianity,

which had already been embraced by the invaders who remained, now, penetrated to the British Isles, and united the populations of the Elbe, the Baltic, and the Vistula in the bonds of a common faith. While the great monuments of the science and literature of the empire were either buried in the cloister or destroyed, a ray of Southern culture diffused itself over the snows of the North, and the Mæsogothic translation of the Gospel by Ulfilas was followed by the appearance of poems, chronicles, and hymns, on every side, from the Alps to the Frozen Sea.

This was the commencement of an era in which the elements of barbarism and civilisation were mingled in almost equal proportions, but which appears to posterity a period of unmixed horror and darkness; for while intelligence, condemned to inertia, has left no fruits behind, many of the evils bequeathed to us by the barbarians exercise a baleful influence even in our own day. The feudal system—the offspring of German manners, and of the necessity of preserving conquests already made—at first a military institution, then a civil law, at length overran all Europe in the form of an insolent aristocracy.

Violence stood for government, and anarchy became law. Serfdom reduced the human being to the level of the beast of burden. From the numerous castles which owed their rise to the fears of conscious guilt their tyrannical seigneurs descended upon the crushed and degraded multitude, still further to deform and mutilate the work of creation.

Though Italy underwent similar trials, yet her destiny was less severe. She was a ruin, but a ruin haunted by the shadow of her gigantic power, sublime in the memories of her majestic past, and gleaming amid the surrounding darkness with the light of bygone glory. The spirit of greatness could never wholly forsake a land yet vibrating to the echoes of Roman victories and Grecian learning. And the beauty and fertility of the country, by attracting a constant succession of conquerors, produced multiplied vicissitudes, whereby that fire of genius, which long years of uniform oppression would probably have extinguished, was kept alive. Moreover, the Lombards founded in Italy a kingdom—a solitary example in those days—containing the germ of representative government, and framed a system of laws which have been extolled by Montesquieu.

The Lombards succumbed in their turn to Charlemagne, but the moral effects of their dominion remained; and it is not to climate, but to the above-named causes, that we must attribute the many elements of renovation, and the energy of character which, in the succeeding period of civilisation, again placed the Italians at the head of the great European movement; even as we attribute the peculiar characteristics and eminent beauties of Spanish and Portuguese poetry to the long residence in the Peninsula of the Arabs: a noble people, gifted with high imaginative and poetic genius.

But human intelligence was still bound by chains

too numerous to allow of its rising to any great sublimity of conception or idea. With the exception of a few popular rhapsodies, and some imitations of Latin authors, no literature as yet existed in Europe.

Both Charlemagne and Alfred attempted to introduce a better state of things, but their efforts were insufficient to counteract the evils produced by the feudal system, and their improvements died with them. The only indication of an intelligent advance towards a higher civilisation was the institution of chivalry; the offspring, in its primitive conception, of valour and generosity. The sentiment of personal independence—for the idea of *popular* liberty had not even been conceived in those days—was the soul of chivalry, and the loving worship addressed by it to beauty—until then contaminated by the impure breath of seigneurial lust—was the first alliance signed between valour and pity, the first altar raised by force to suffering innocence.

But chivalry—a solitary flower blooming among tares and weeds—was destined quickly to degenerate. The priesthood, fearing its effects, determined to take the direction of it into their own hands, and succeeded in doing so. It was transformed from a civil into a religious institution, and degenerated into fanaticism, intolerance, and ferocity.

Such was the third period of civilisation, a period concluded in the ninth century with the first Crusade; an enterprise displaying, in its fullest development

and maximum of power, the spirit of superstition, aristocracy, and chivalry then ruling Europe.

At the voice of a hermit, the entire West arose to arms, and precipitated itself upon the East.

But, owing to the working of that hidden law which controls all human things, the very circumstance which appears to attest the vigour of an institution is often the cause of its decay. The forces hostile to civilisation had reached their climax, and were consequently doomed to decline. The Crusades lasted two centuries—two centuries of movement and agitation, that broke the slumbers of Europe. The nobles were compelled to sell their lands to meet the expenses of their expeditions, and while they were fighting in foreign countries their power was weakened at home. Many of the nations journeying towards the Holy Land met together in Italy, where civilisation had never been wholly destroyed, where the attempt of Crescentius had already suggested the idea of union, and where Venice, Pisa, and Genoa already extended their commerce over the Adriatic and Mediterranean. From Italy they proceeded to Constantinople, where the lamp of science and literature, though more dimly burning, was not extinguished; and thence to the East, where they lingered long, renewing their intercourse with the Arabs, whose works and discoveries they carried away with them, returning to their own countries to teach something like an uniformity of manners, customs, and opinions.

Such were the results upon Europe of an enter-

prise directed towards a widely different aim. When Peter the Hermit raised the cry of *War to the infidel!* he little dreamed that that cry would prove the cause of an universal resurrection. But the hour had come. The human mind was aroused to a consciousness of the weight of the chains by which it had been fettered. An electric thrill appeared to run through the whole district between the Mediterranean and the Pole. . . . The spirit of liberty, which is the life and soul of modern civilisation, now first manifested itself in Europe, vaster and more sublime than the sentiment of independence which had been the characteristic of the ancient world, because founded upon human nature itself, while the other is based merely upon the idea of citizenship.

Then began the struggle between brute force and intelligence; between inertia and the law of progress; between all the forces opposed to civilisation and the yearning of mankind towards improvement: a struggle which still endures after the lapse of eight centuries.

The peoples had all of them undergone similar conditions of servitude and degradation, and all now arose in assertion of their rights. Italy gave the signal by her ever-memorable Lombard League, and her cities vied with one another in acquiring new privileges and superior institutions. The great towns of France and Spain followed the example, and in Germany the citizens of the various towns combined to keep armed watch over their liberties, threatened

by the abuses and encroachments of the emperors and nobles. The Rhenish confederation was formed, in which sixty cities took part, and the ports of the Baltic and North Sea were opened to the commerce of Italy by the Hanseatic League.

A short time before this the foundations of regular government had been laid in England by the Magna-Charta, and not long afterwards the signal of Swiss independence was given by the arrow of Tell, and the flag of liberty floated upon the mountain-peaks of Uri, Schweitz, and Unterwalden.

The intellectual development of the nations, which had been so long interrupted, was renewed with their political regeneration, and the character of the first poetic essays of each was very similar. The Arabs had communicated to the Europeans their taste, their descriptive power, and their inclination towards the fanciful and mystic—an inclination which the Platonism transfused into Christianity tended to increase. The chivalric element was revived by the invasions of the Normans—a people carrying the love of adventure to excess.

All these causes contributed to the diffusion throughout all lands of the *Gaie Science* of the troubadours. It was as if an universal song of joy arose to hail the dawn of a new existence. Transplanted by the Normans into Sicily and England, it soon became common property, and in every land the lays of love and chivalry appear to have sprung from one and the same root. In the North and in the South,

on the lyre of the troubadour and on the harp of minstrel and Minnesänger, we find the "*Gaie Science*" resplendent with the same hues, assuming the same forms, and revealing the same beauties and defects. In all countries it was marked by a chivalric spirit, a leaning towards the marvellous, a tint of idealism, and an imaginative style, fertile in comparison and conceits; similarity of circumstances, memories, and desires, everywhere impressed it with similar characteristics, amid climates the most diverse.

Thus the literature of Italy was at that time more spiritual and meditative in character than it has since been, while the German revealed none of that tendency to abstractions and indefinite phantasy which were the results of the imitation of Southern types, consequent upon the frequent Teutonic eruptions into Italy, and which continued to prevail until German literature underwent the powerful impress of the Reformation.

[Mazzini goes on to show how Italian intellect, fostered by the above-mentioned causes, soon left the rest of Europe behind, but the immense benefits conferred upon Italian literature by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, were not lost upon other nations, the inventions of paper and the printing-press affording a new means of enlightenment, and a new link of union among the peoples. The increase of moral energy, which was the result of

these discoveries, was naturally first expended upon religion—the basis of all things, civil and political—and the Reformation, the first important fruit of the labours of four centuries, may be considered to have concluded the fourth period of civilisation.

Failing in the South, but striking deep root in the North, the Reformation appears at first to have created an insuperable barrier between the two; but in fact the new impulse which it gave to intelligence in the North restored it to intellectual equality with the South, where literature had already become corrupted by the pernicious influence of princely persecution or protection, causing the writer to devote the whole energies of his mind to the perfection of those external elegances and graces of language which characterise the too much vaunted ages of Charles V., Leo X., and Louis XIV., and which degenerated into the extravagant conceits and inflation of style which distinguish the Gongoristi of Spain, Dubartas in France, and Marini in Italy.

The very intolerance that banished the adherents to the Reformed doctrine from the South also contributed to draw closer the bonds of union among the peoples; the exiles carried with them the knowledge of many new forms of industry, and while commerce benefited largely by the increased contact of nations, the press spread the discoveries of Galileo, the ideas of Thomas More, and the historic sketches of Machiavelli from one end of Europe to the other. Grotius taught the necessity of an universal law

of nations; Descartes abolished the dogma of authority.

A crowd of writers followed in their steps, all of whom addressed themselves to Europe at large, and appeared to have set themselves to prove the truth proclaimed by Bacon, that the knowledge of all things worthy to be known can never be the achievement of a single man, a single nation, or a single age. The treasure of universal knowledge can only be obtained by the union and concord of all the human faculties.]

Thus the struggle between truth and error, excited by the spirit of liberty in the preceding epoch, was perpetuated in a thousand shapes during this fifth period of civilisation, with various success, in the different countries of Europe.

While the creative genius of Peter the Great added Russia to the list of civilised nations; while the Netherlands achieved their independence with their blood, and England raised herself upon her triple basis of civil, political, and religious liberty—all glory, wealth, and energy were lost to Spain, crushed beneath the rod of an oppression as stupid as ferocious; dismembered Poland was struck off the roll of nations; and Italy, which had given learning and civilisation to a world whose every province is blessed by nature, whose every city is enriched by works of every form of genius, whose every sod covers the dust of a hero—Italy, torn by foreign and

domestic wars, cast down and degraded by her own children, lost union, political existence, courage, and virtue—all, save her great memories and a hope.

But is not that hope the pledge of resurrection given by God to the fallen?

[Assuming that the progress achieved, and the firm basis already laid for a complete accord among the peoples, must now be evident to all, Mazzini passes on to days nearer to our own.]

The last forty years have brought mankind through a series of dangers, sorrows, and transformations, to a point from which, in future, they can only advance united. They are so already in attachment to the same ideas and principles.

The gigantic apparition that arose to oppress the South with one hand, while it extended the other towards the North, threatened to stifle the aspiration of Europe; but civilisation, though it sometimes advances upon circuitous paths, never in fact recedes.

The colossus fell, overthrown by the union of the peoples far more than by that of the princes; but in the meantime, two-thirds of Europe had passed ten years under the influence of uniform circumstances, laws, and government; and those diversities of character which had held the nations asunder had been gradually worn away by the moral friction occasioned by these causes, and the vicissitudes of constant war and invasion. The sons of the North

had once more issued from their wild ravines to pluck the fruits of civilisation. Thus while their princes were signing treaties and compacts among themselves, an alliance of the peoples, destined to be more lasting and inviolable, was sworn upon the altar of liberty. They looked back upon ages past. The nations had attacked and oppressed each other in turn, rivers of blood had watered the earth, their common mother, and for what reason? A prejudice, a caprice, at times a single word, appeared to have given rise to strife so deplorable. And what had been the results? The peoples had consumed their own strength while thus unconsciously serving the ambitious dreams or the arts of those whose sole aim was to secure their own dominion.

They looked to the future and asked themselves, Why should we thus hate one another? What benefit have we derived from this mutual hatred? Have we not sprung from a common root? Are not our wants and faculties the same? Is not the sign of brotherhood stamped upon the brow of each? Has not nature inspired us all with the same yearning towards higher things? Let us love one another! Human creatures are born to love. Let us unite: united, we shall be stronger.

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A community of desires and wants does then exist in Europe; a common thought, an universal mind, is leading the nations through different paths to one and the same goal. Literature, therefore—if

it be not to sink into triviality—must identify itself with this general tendency; must express, assist, and direct it; must become European.

And the impulse is already given. The literature of the various peoples no longer presents that partial character and exclusive taste, unfitting it to obtain the rights of citizenship among foreign nations.

. . . Ideas of an universal character more frequently occur, and a wider arena is laid open to intelligence. This has been the work of a few great men. His acute sensibility, intellectual independence, profound thought, and giant soul, would have fitted Lord Byron to become the model of an European poet, had not calumny, envy, and the lack of all response to his own aspirations among the men of his time, driven him into the isolation of despair, and caused him more frequently to depict his own mind, than to become the interpreter of humanity. Nevertheless, as every truly great mind is a reflection, an image of universal nature, he not seldom earned the laurels that are of every age and nation, and his works have deeply moved and influenced the whole of Europe.

His great philosophic power, endless variety of fancy, and breadth of vision, render Göthe the master mind of the epoch; although the struggle between good and evil, symbolised in his creations, assumes an aspect rather ideological and appertaining to the past, than real and applicable to the present day.

Our own Monti might have taken his place be-

tween the two, had the depth and earnestness of his mind been equal to his powers of expression and brilliancy of imagination.

These three great men derived their inspiration from the master-works of all nations: they sought the beautiful wheresoever it was to be found, and transfused a portion of the universal harmony into their verse.

The results of their efforts have been immense. The study of foreign languages and literature is now pursued with ardour, and is fostered both in France and England by numerous journals and reviews devoted to the examination of foreign works. Voyages and travels are multiplied; and henceforward no generous voice can be raised in Europe without awakening a responding thrill in the hearts of millions.

The edifice which pedantry had raised upon the opinions and mythology of the ancients has fallen to rise no more; and a young generation, full of fervent hope and life, bounds over its ruins in search of a higher and nobler goal.

This yearning after a higher aim is revealed even in the writings of many, from the Neva to the Ebro, to whom the free utterance of the heart's language is forbidden; while it shines forth its full radiance in the hymns of Delavigne, the melodies of Thomas Moore, the dramatic works of Martinez de la Rosa, and the writings of Nicolini. The need of a purer religion is revealed in the works of Manzoni, Lamar-

tine, Wordsworth, Oehlenschläger, and others. Even in Spain the special taste of the nation is merging into one more universal; the poetical compositions of Melendez, Ariazza, and Quintana are a proof of this. Russia herself, so lately emerged from barbarism, reveals the European tendency in the poems of Koslov, Pozharsky, and Pouchkine.

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[Here Mazzini again indignantly protests against the accusation of want of patriotism brought against those who urge the Italians to bear their part in the formation of the new European literature. He maintains that Italy has long ceased to possess a literature of her own, and that she must reform her laws of taste by meditation upon the essence of the beautiful, and a careful comparison of the multiple forms it assumes, and their effect upon the human mind, in order to create a literature which shall represent and express every application of the one universal principle guiding the progress of the human family.]

And in order to found this new literature, the Italians must study the literature of other nations, not for purposes of imitation, but in order to know the various shapes in which nature reveals herself to her children; to learn how various are the paths by which to reach the heart; how numerous the harmonies of the soul and the sources of the passions; even as the master's hand, wandering in prelude over the chords of the harp, modulates through each in

turn, in order to select the one most fitted to give utterance to the hidden sentiment vibrating in his own bosom.

. . . . . .

What will be the form assumed by this new literature; what the opinions, rules, and principles, which should direct those aspiring to reach this aim? I know not. Rules and precepts do but suffocate true genius, and all that can be usefully done in this wise must be to excite, purify, or touch the soul, and then leave it perfect freedom in its flight.

I know not even by what paths this intellectual renovation must be first approached; but I do know that the phenomena of moral nature and the inner man, will be its chosen domain; and that it will regard physical nature and the outward man but as their outward symbol and manifestation. I know that social man in action—that is to say, in the organised development of his faculties towards a given aim—will be its subject; and I know that this development depends upon the action and effect of certain passions universally and truly felt, and that the mission of literature must therefore be to cultivate and direct them towards that aim.

I know that intellect and enthusiasm must no longer be divided; that the secret of the universe can only be divined by one uniting both these faculties in the highest degree; and that the truly European writer must be a philosopher holding in his hand the poet's lyre.

I know that the universal order and inward force whence life and motion spring are manifested in every object, even as the sun is reflected entire in every drop of dew; that typical beauty is everywhere one, and affects all mankind, but that the elements of the beautiful are scattered and diffused throughout all nature, and all human things, even in those wherein we see them degraded or disfigured by interest, vice, or sensual habit.

And I know that the most certain means of comprehending and realising the beautiful is the constant and intelligent study of nature undisguised; and the readiest method of efficiently reproducing it is a profound, psychological, and historical study of mankind; and the fittest temple for the revelation of the truth is an ardent, ingenuous, pure, and untiring spirit.

These few principles should, I think, be set before the writer. Genius will do the rest in its own fashion.

Young men, who aspire to benefit your fellow-men, an important mission is confided to you by humanity. In former days the nation entrusted the sacred volume in which the laws and religion of its fathers were inscribed into the keeping of the poet, saying to him: "Be it yours to see that this deposit remain inviolate in the hearts of your fellow-citizens; your inspirations are sanctified and revered only within the walls of your country." But you will have a whole world for the theatre of your glory; every vibration of your lyre is the patrimony of the

human race; every chord you touch will resound beyond the extremest limits of the ocean. The spirit of love appeals to the hearts of all the inhabitants of this our Europe, but confusedly, and with unequal power. Many centuries of error have worn away the impress of our common origin, but heaven has given us poetry wherewith to reunite the scattered and divided brethren. It is yours to awaken and diffuse that spirit of love on every side; to break down every barrier to human brotherhood, and to sing the passions that are universal, and the truths that are eternal.

Therefore you must study the works of all the nations. He who is acquainted with but one literature has read but one page of the book wherein the mysteries of genius are inscribed. Unite in tacit communion with those who suffer the same sorrows, rejoice in the same joys, and strive towards the same goal. What matter whether the sun dart his rays through the azure or through a veil of clouds? The hearts of all men beat more quickly at the breath of beauty; all men have a tear and a word of consolation for the cry of the unhappy; and lives there one whose soul is not renewed within him at the name of liberty?

Let these be the sources of your inspiration, and your poems will be an utterance of the voice of the universe.

The palm of immortality blooms at the end of the career before you; the peoples will plant it in

reverence upon the tomb of him who first shall reach the goal, and eternity will inscribe upon his sepulchre, *Here sleeps the Poet of Nature, the Benefactor of Humanity.*

ON THE HISTORICAL DRAMA.

(From the *Antologia* of Florence, July 1830.)

When the adversaries of a new idea, which has given rise to fierce disputes and long debates, change their ground and cease to attack the elementary principle in order to combat its consequences and modes of application, we may safely assert that the day of agreement is not far distant, and that the triumph of the contested idea is infallible.

No new ideas have arisen in any age without exciting the opposition of those who have either grown old under the influence of the former opinion, or who are not gifted with sufficient manliness of intellect to enable them to overcome the errors of a superstitious education. Strong in the authority of long possession of the ground, they first assail the bases and fundamental principles of the new idea, compelling them to pass through the preliminary and most severe ordeal upon the field of generalisation. If it issue victorious from these first attacks, its adversaries descend to details.

[Having shown that the question of romanticism has reached the second stage, in which—the principle of literary liberty being no longer contested—its former adversaries limit themselves to disputing as to the method of its application, Mazzini examines the indications of this progress of opinion in the condition of the drama in Europe. The question of the so-called Aristotelian unities has been irrevocably decided by public opinion.]

All, or nearly all, have agreed to reject a precept which, by assigning definite and uniform limits to action, infinite and diverse in its very nature, breaks or distorts the sequence of cause and effect, destroys all harmony and concordance between the means and the end, and falsifies alike history and the invariable laws of nature.

All admit that the boundaries of time and space must be regulated (under due restrictions) by the nature of the subject, that the only verisimilitude possible is that essential and intimate verisimilitude dependent upon the connection between the various parts of the action or story and a philosophical study of the real: and that the efficacy and power of the picture lies in a great measure in the interest which it excites.

Nevertheless, the dispute is still carried on as to the right application of these principles, as to whether it be the business of the poet to create, or merely to

represent; whether the dramatist should reproduce the precise historical fact, with its every element of whatsoever nature or description, or select only those beyond the common sphere, and elevate his subject to a given degree of grandeur and dignity; whether, in short, the affections or bare historic truth are the true centre and pivot of dramatic art. The question is one involving principles of great and universal importance.

It is unnecessary to demonstrate that the so-called *classical* drama of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was in no way historical, except in the names of the *dramatis personæ*. It might, not inexactly, be defined as the representation of the supreme crisis of a given passion, symbolised in an imaginary personage, invested with a certain historical character and resemblance. There is no local colour, no indication of the customs of the period or of the people, nor of their virtues, vices, or beliefs. Generally speaking, it portrays sentiments and affections for the most part fictitious, in language studied and pompous, often empty, and occasionally sublime.

But the poet did not seek his inspiration from history, nor set before himself any purpose or aim of general utility. He composed a certain subject, plot, or design, in the solitude of his closet, and then turned over the history of various nations in search of a fact that would adapt itself to his preconceived plan. For this reason almost all these dramas wear

a certain tint of uniformity often degenerating into monotony. They are like musical variations upon different themes, but identical in method of modulation and in style, and played in precisely the same measure.

Time, and the progress of civilisation, proved the insufficiency of this method. The fire of intelligence, which had smouldered for a time, was rekindled; nor could dramatic literature remain alone uninfluenced by the general movement.

The drama, calculated as it is to have a direct and powerful influence upon the people, should have been eminently liberal, popular, and national, but was, in fact, the creature of the aristocracy, and so diplomatically educated as to fit it to become the amusement of the noble and powerful. That which should have been the picture of our inner human life, of the mysteries of the heart—vast, varied, and infinite as they—was in fact but the personification of abstractions; or if ever the attempt was made to depict man as he is—the representation—cramped by arbitrary laws, and I know not what narrow interpretation of the idea of unity—was fractionary and incomplete, reflecting but one side of the human polyhedron. . . . . Alfieri arose and regenerated tragedy by shaping and torturing it to his will; but it was as the flash of lightning that illumines the darkness for an instant, not the dawning brightness prophetic of the coming day. The light shone rather to display our degradation than to teach us

how to rise to greatness. Born of an aristocratic race in an enslaved country, and given over for seven and twenty years to pedagogic influence, or to a life of idleness that injured his genius—then compelled to falsify and cramp the free powers of his mind by elementary grammatical and philological studies—Alfieri—let us frankly declare a fact that is irrefutably proved by every page of his memoirs—was a tragedian more from persevering energy of will than from spontaneity of inspiration, and he was incapable of giving us the reform required by the age.

He who would constitute himself a reformer must have a full and profound knowledge of the elements and intellectual means and forces of which the civilisation of his country is composed.

Alfieri, an indefatigable student of works and writers belonging to an exclusive system of literature and civilisation, recognised existing differences, but saw no further, for he was unable to penetrate below the surface. Living at a time when the elements of Italian civilisation, owing to adverse circumstances, still fermented unseen; irritated by the spectacle of the enervation and inanity of cowardly, stupid, or venal *literati;* naturally impatient, and by pride rendered misanthropical, he wandered through Italy as through a cemetery, without understanding the secret of the silence around him, or suspecting the existence of a civilisation that only required a means of manifestation and development, without

comprehending the special characteristics of the moral condition of humanity in his own age.

Yet even what he did see and comprehend sufficed to convince him that the sufferings and the hopes of Italy were centred round one sole affection; that it was the business of the dramatic poet to teach that affection beyond every other, and to strive to rekindle it where it slumbered. An energetic and obstinate persistence in one idea will either make men mad, or make them great. The mind of Alfieri was inspired and his heart was roused by one idea, but it was a noble, generous, and sublime idea, and alone it sufficed to win for him the baptism of genius.

So long as a ray of sunlight illumines her fields, Italy will reverence Alfieri as the first to give to tragedy a noble mission, to raise it from the dust in which it lay, and make of it the instructor of the people.

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But Alfieri, although he sanctioned the principle of literary reform, was himself incapable of applying it. He did not recognise the degree of civilisation which Italy had in fact achieved, and regarding his age as disinherited by nature, he set himself to regenerate us through fear rather than through love. His works do not picture to us the paradise of the free man, but the hell of the slave, and he seeks to compel us to embrace liberty through horror of tyranny.

His method is not that of elevating the mind and heart by setting before us the eloquent spectacle of the universe, nor seeking to awaken us to a sense of

our human dignity and high destiny: he strives to dry up every source of sensibility within us save one, —hatred of the oppressor alone remains in restless torturing intensity.

Despising the multitude from his own conscious superiority, from his want of observation, and perhaps also from hereditary habit, he generally banishes the people from his dramas, and concentrates the attention and the interest upon a few personages symbolic of his conceptions and ideas. All secondary plots, confidants, accessories—in short, all the ornaments and embellishments introduced into tragedy by the French school, disappear from his works without any attempt to supply their place. This accounts for the sense of oppression that weighs upon the mind in reading Alfieri. One feels as if one were hearing the doctrines of liberty taught in the depths of the prison. Anger is the infallible and sole impression left behind; and anger, if undirected by a definite aim and certainty of means, seldom leads to more than a terrible but fruitless revenge.

Alfieri built up a monument of all the chains, racks, daggers, and faggots that for centuries have tortured the human race; and, with a master's hand, he wrote the word Liberty thereon in characters of fire, even as the Genoese inscribed it over the doors of their prisons. But it is a word which, though simple and unique in its primitive meaning, has always been differently interpreted and adored according to the times, and to the moral and intel-

lectual condition of its worshippers. Alfieri thought to lead us back to times—noble it may be—but irrevocably past. You might imagine that his scenes had been written and represented in the Forum, or in the palace of the first Roman emperors, were it not for occasional touches revealing that the liberty he treats of is less severe and grave, while the tyranny, though as cruel, is baser and more artful than the nobler ferocity of antiquity.

Modern civilisation—vast, active, and daring, yet persistent; various in method, yet uniform in advance; fruitful in ideas and contrasts, yet single in its fundamental conception and aim—is rarely and unwittingly, if ever, represented in his works. And hence that yearning after independence, that thirst after an undefined and barren liberty of no special age or colour, and always the same whatever the period or subject pourtrayed, assumes too much the appearance of a fantastic ideal or impracticable theory; it sounds like mere declamation, and has laid him open to the accusations of the cowardly and ill-disposed. The attempt failed. The cause was evident to those who understood that, in tragedy, as in every other form of literature, the idea and the form must proceed in well-balanced companionship. They saw that where the one is amplified and enlarged, the other must be so too, or it will produce a discrepancy destructive to the general effect. They saw that the ideal, however grandly expressed, can have no efficacious influence, except by arousing strong passions which have already

taken deep root; but that strong passions are of the few, while the multitude are more easily governed by the eloquence of facts and the positive reasoning of example. Therefore it would have been wiser to have kept more closely to history, especially in a period where almost every form of study had an historic bearing and tendency, and the creation of contrasts and contradictions between the various branches of literature could only produce uncertainty and delay.

Moreover, the cause of truth is too lovely, too sacred and secure, to render it needful that its advocates should restrict themselves to mere general types. It should be served and illustrated not merely by ideas, but facts. The popular memory would furnish a whole course of such lessons among every people, only requiring arrangement to adapt them to the purpose. Manzoni arose, and with him arose the historical drama in Italy. Certainly, this description of composition was not new in Europe. Shakespeare and Schiller had naturalised it in England and in Germany; but those great men had no other obstacles to overcome than such as are inherent to the style of composition itself; while against Manzoni were arrayed the *Literati*, the academies, the journals, the many prejudices and fears rendered potent by habit or justified by circumstances, and all the vanity, envy, and intrigues, which in no country—I say it with shame—are so rife as in this most unhappy land, where, more than in any other, we have need of loyalty and brotherhood.

It is, or it appears to be, in the very nature of human things, that when ideas have been carried to extremes, they return to a *juste milieu.* The folly of confounding the excesses to which a principle may be carried with the principle itself, is nearly as common among those who affirm as among those who deny it. The last, fearing to be drawn on further than they are disposed to go by the admission of a first consequence, obstinately deny the whole; and, in order better to attack the principle, they pursue it to its ultimate consequences, until they persuade themselves that those ultimate consequences and the principle itself are one and the same thing. The first, annoyed at having, by means of interminable discussions, slowly to achieve the triumph of a system that is in substance true, at once demand the admission of the last corollary, aware that should they succeed in obtaining its acceptance, the rest is their own. Thus the impatience of some, and the scruples of others, render the subject still more involved, and close up the way to concord. Both the adversaries and the advocates of the historic drama—with few exceptions—abandoned themselves to this method of contest, and with how much injury to literature, our Italy—thus left a prey to every doubt, and unable to attain to any stability of belief or opinion—bears witness.

Some maintain that the affections are the soul of dramatic art, and imagination its queen, investing reality with her own hues. "We do not," they say,

"I require that the stage should give us the mere representation of a fact, or of individual human nature with all its actual contradictions and defects, but rather the picture of a single exalted passion in all its universal characteristics. You should draw your tragic models from your own mind, and fashion your conceptions after the ideal handed down to you by the ancients, grand, uniform, immutable, and elevated above the common sphere of humanity. Life, as it is, is unworthy of imitation; nature is given to the poet to correct, modify, and enlarge, according to his fancy. Poetry, with its powers of imagery and expression, assists to elevate you above reality, to raise you from the individual to the abstract and ideal.* Never abandon the order of style and ideas you select at the beginning of the work, or you will be guilty of high treason against dramatic art. Do not set before yourself any definite moral aim; every determinate aim is destructive to poetry and to the free genius of the writer."

* Some years later, less careless in expression, I should not have accepted this word *ideal* from the *Classicists* whom I sought to attack. I should have denied their right to use it. Their drama was either destitute of ideal, or merely copied the ideal of an epoch already extinct.

The true *ideal* is the sacred and supreme aim of art, as of every other manifestation of life, and our problem is to discover so much of it as lies hidden in all *facts*, and to teach others to recognise and adore it.

But the *ideal* which we seek is the eternal ruling truth, the law which governs human things, the Divine Idea which is the soul of the universe. And the true value and meaning of the word was unknown to the *Classicists*—that which they called *ideal*, in contradistinction to the *real*, was the abstract arbitrary conception of an individual, or of a school which rejected all progress.—(1861.)

"Let it be your object to move the reader; if at the expense of truth or history, it matters little; so long as you keep within the boundaries marked out by Father Aristotle and his successors, we will proclaim you poets."

The others answer: "It is not true that the affections are the basis of the dramatic art: it is not true that the office of the poet is to excite emotion. The soul of the drama is truth, and the office of the writer is to display the whole naked truth to the public. The *ideal* is folly; it is an attempt to substitute something else for the truth, while the truth itself might be reached by the study of nature and humanity. Truth is to be found in fact. Things which have really existed are your domain. Imagination is the mortal enemy of morality, and of all useful purpose: abjure it. Here are chronicles and histories. Truth is here. Seize upon it, and transplant it into your dramas, embellished by poetry and the affections. History gives us the results of human passions in broad outline, and presents their outward and material expression; it is yours to describe their poetic side, to give us their inward essence, and show us their hidden springs of life. Pourtray the sentiments which cause the acts of the individual, but go not a line beyond this."

"All things are connected by the relationship of cause and effect. The fact you select to represent is a harmonious, complex whole, which will neither bear addition nor diminution without changing its

nature. Consequences are strictly allied to principles; every incident of the fact modifies its results; every circumstance moves some spring, the action of which assists to bring about the principal event."

"You cannot, therefore, mutilate or alter one single circumstance or detail connected with a fact, without destroying the true proportions of cause and effect; nor introduce a new one without being constrained to vary the sum of results, and give a false idea of the force of causes and the laws of nature. Do not, then, depart from the truth, or you must fall into falsehood; supply the silence of history as regards words, but religiously preserve the field of fact intact in every particular."

Such are the arguments used on either side, and both sides are, I think, mistaken, exclusive, exacting, and obstinate. However, whilst one party voluntarily casts itself upon falsehood, its adversaries at least attach themselves to a true principle, though they are too precipitate in the consequences which they deduce.

To the first it has been often said that "the age is weary of wandering among the false and unreal; . . . . . that the mere momentary and purposeless emotion excited by the representation of personages who never had nor could have any real existence, passes away like summer lightning in the desert, and leaves no trace behind."

They have been asked, "Of what use is your *ideal* to us, surrounded as we are, and urged, excited, or

restrained by facts on every side? The finger of God has impressed his own unity upon that complex assemblage of various faculties and passions, man. Nature manifests her truths and reveals her secrets through facts. Why should you assume to be wiser than God and nature? You pretend to embellish nature, transforming her into a mosaic, and to explain the human enigma, making man as many-sided as a crystal. . . . . But nature is an absolute and jealous divinity. Lovely, eloquent, and instructive in all her inequalities and contrasts, she hides her face, and remains mute to those who, by attempting to re-fashion her, profane her."

Man is one, however various the aspects he may assume; his existence is dominated, and the course of his life governed as a rule, by one idea; but a thousand uncertainties, anomalies, and apparent contradictions, present themselves to those who view him with a superficial eye. The Hamlet of Shakespeare may be regarded—speaking generally—as the abstract human type. Striving with a thousand different sentiments, strange and inconsistent in action, oscillating between noble and paltry motives and ideas, hesitating and uncertain to the last, he reaches his miserable end. And yet with what completeness and reality is this character, which no Classicist would have dared to attempt, shaped forth by the master's hand.

The morality and utility of the picture consists in the proof it affords that the human mystery, when

most powerfully and completely represented, reveals the unity that governs its every variety; the unity which makes the whole life of an individual the manifestation of a potent hidden idea, and causes every word and act to betray some portion of his soul; that unity which is evinced in Cromwell and Bonaparte, as much as in Franklin and Washington.

What is wanted is to find the common origin or centre to which all the diverse and apparently contradictory passions converge, or—to use an expression which aptly expresses my meaning—to reduce all the fractions to the same denominator. But he who once abandons truth for the abstract and the ideal, cuts, but does not unravel, the gordian knot; and he who persists in representing man in one of his various aspects only, resembles those disinterrers of the antique who content themselves with worshipping fragments.

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However, the verdict of the age, to which every form of literature destined to endure is obliged to conform, has sufficiently answered the arguments of the *Idealists.*

Not so with their adversaries, who appeal to that verdict in their own support, and who, as they logically carry out principles in themselves true, call for more severe and diligent attention from the critic. Undoubtedly the historical system, as at present understood in Italy, is the better of the two. . . . . But it is intolerant and exaggerated in the

application of its ruling principle, as is the case with almost all new systems while striving to subvert the old.

If the drama, in order to be truly *romantic*, were bound to follow so humbly in the wake of history, if the poet were bound to falsify and restrain his own nature and genius for fear of falsifying or overstepping the truth, our modern drama would be converted into a constant struggle between the inspirations of genius and historic truth. Now, it is only from the perfect harmony and balance of the two that we may expect great results. In literature, as in everything else, we may safely regard the *exclusive* as error, and the eclectic* as true.

That every fact is an indivisible whole, the antecedents, accessories, causes, and effects of which are reciprocally linked and bound together, none will deny. That the historical circumstances leading to an event necessitate that event, or, in other words, that the reason of a fact lies in the mode of existence of the fact itself, is also true.

But how far are we to carry the consequences of this principle? If to the farthest extreme, then indeed the question is already solved. The connection between all the incidents of the fact, and the action of each upon the others being universal, unalterable, and interminable, of course no single circumstance,

* Here again, had this been written a few years later, with a more perfect comprehension of the true value of the word, I should not have written *eclectic*. The meaning I then attached to it was *a tolerant choice*. —(1861.)

however minute, can be said to be less essential than another; and all of them, however various their apparent importance, must be preserved as subtle links, not one of which is to be removed without breaking the chain. Thus, every fact resembles a machine in which the subtraction of the smallest spring, or the introduction of a straw, may destroy all action and motion. Shall we then agree to assign to the drama the part of a chronicle in dialogue, or shall we not rather say that a principle, the logical consequences of which are to stifle genius and destroy inspiration, is unfit to be made the basis of an art essentially poetic?

Let us not forget that poetry is the first requisite of the drama, and that poetry, though never independent of historic truth, is yet unable to subsist upon reality alone. Poetry, while it makes of human things its subject, yet regards them from on high, and is chiefly nourished and sustained by its own inborn energy and fervour. It is like a lever, which, although it may be brought to bear upon every object in the universe of reality in turn, yet rests for ever upon its own immoveable fulcrum in the heart. It is as a lake that reflects the surrounding woods and fields with greater brilliancy and distinctness in proportion to its own purity and tranquillity. The offspring of heaven and genius, poetry touches without resting on the earth, even as earth and heaven meet without mingling at the horizon.

In ourselves, rather than in material nature, lie

the true source and life of the beautiful. The human soul is the sun which diffuses light on every side, investing creation with its lovely hues, and calling forth the poetic element that lies hidden in every existing thing.

Now, if you withdraw the fulcrum from the lever, or disturb the quiet of the lake by constantly casting within it some material object; if you extinguish the light of the soul, and arrest the intellect in its flight by forcibly dragging it back within the limits of an obscure, unconnected, and mute reality,—what have you gained?

The harmony, power, and fecundity of genius will disappear before the horror of a servitude—less stupid and unjust than the former it is true,—but all servitude is death to inspiration.

The poet, thus entangled and impeded by facts, chilled by the atmosphere of positive reality, and compelled to restrain himself within finite and determinate limits, will descend from his throne to assume the mechanical office of a translator, or give us a cold and miserable copy of a picture doomed to remain incomplete; for history alone can never supply a perfect and complete dramatic action or story; nor can all the incidents belonging to any fact be introduced upon the stage within the proportions prescribed by art, and with poetic effect.

In order to bring historic personages vividly upon the scene, it is necessary to re-create them; the poet, like the angel of resurrection, must breathe upon

their ashes, and inspire them with a new soul—the soul of the genius that revives their hidden faculties and passions, and inscribes their secret history upon their brows. If it be not so, these historic forms will but appear before us as corpses moved by galvanic power, and still retaining the odour of the sepulchre. They will present themselves at the banquet of life, cold, pale, and silent, as the ghost of Banquo at the banquet of Macbeth. Now, is this all we have a right to require from the first-born of nature?

Should this opinion—tending to restrict the domain of the poet to the mere storehouse of history—endure, it would, if I mistake not, lead us to complete intellectual uncertainty. Unlimited and unscrupulous faith often ends in scepticism, for the mind that has blindly and incautiously trusted is generally completely overwhelmed by the first appearance of even partial doubt.

Such will be the case with the supporters of the strictly historical school, as soon as they perceive that even history does not reflect the perfect and complete image of facts. The facts did exist, and were combined and connected with an infinite number of other facts, capable of many and various explanations, and produced by a thousand unseen causes; but how, and in virtue of what law, which of their narrators can say?

The chroniclers were men. If contemporary with the facts they relate, they were subject to the influence of faction or prejudice, and therefore likely

to mislead others, or to be themselves misled. If they lived at a later date, they were of necessity obliged to trust to unconnected memoirs, or to the uncertain echo of tradition. Every tradition is but the translation of a translation, and all the chroniclers, whether contemporary with or posterior to the events they describe, were necessarily ignorant of a multitude of small particulars, wanting in the power of philosophic selection, and inexpert in distinguishing the true elements of a fact from its consequences.

They wrote from day to day, from month to month, in the order of date; mixing up things private with things public, and interrupting the narrative of an alteration in the republic to relate some circumstances connected with their own convent, with their colleagues in the art, or even with their domestic concerns; without ever imagining that facts and events of a certain order and importance require to be verified and interpreted one by the other, and that by thus mutilating or dissevering them, they rendered them doubly obscure to their descendants.

Born in and representing a simple, rough, and earnest period, subject to all the dreams of enthusiasm and all the terrors of a superstitious religion which was identified with their very existence, they did not shrink from the introduction of the miraculous, and frequently, like the ancients, cut the gordian knot of intricate events by evoking the intervention of a supernatural will.

If to all these causes of error we add the sectarian

animosity that prevailed in those days, so that almost every writer was more or less the slave of some party or opinion; if we remember the humble condition of the majority of the chroniclers, and the difficulty, uncertainty, and danger of communication between city and city, who shall venture—even when most faithfully following their records—to declare such were the precise facts of the case, thus organised and ordained by nature to serve as an impressive example?

I am far from wishing to inculcate the historical scepticism which some writers of the eighteenth century have deduced, in pride of system, from the observation of isolated instances.

Yet any one who has felt the difficulty of verifying the most recent and notable events, and the influence of blind popular beliefs upon writers; any one who has observed the readiness of human servility to accept and to echo every species of error, and remarked how various is the testimony of history, so that contradictory evidence, with regard to a particular fact, may frequently be met with even in the space of a single page; will be convinced that the only true and stable conclusion to be drawn from this discussion is, that even the study of history may become fruitless or dangerous, unless interpreted by the light of philosophy. Granted even the greatest exactitude in the compiler; who can describe the words, thoughts, acts, and intentions of the dead—which form, however, an important part of every

fact—without, to some extent, speculating or guessing? And who can make such guesses without drawing to his aid both deduction and analogy; deductions testing history itself by general rules, and that sense of proportion suggested by philosophy, from the study of the abstract man?

Our narrow and limited method of examining facts is a relic of the blind veneration we still entertain for the past. We have long been mentally enslaved, and a single shout of liberty is not powerful enough to rouse us to throw off the errors of ages. The habit of slavery is still upon us, and even yet we crouch before idol after idol, and bear incense to their altars with the words of independence on our lips!

Hence we have modern imitations substituted to the true antique, and old systems replaced by others as exclusive. Hence the sphere of the drama is confined within narrow and definite limits; the *ideal* is repudiated for the *real;* and every chronicler is accepted as an oracle of truth.

But at the present day we are bound to raise ourselves to nobler and broader views. The minute and superstitious adoration of facts is at an end, and the time has arrived for teaching devotion to principles.

Hitherto we have wandered like antiquaries amid the ruins of ages past, disinterring isolated records and epitaphs. But the amount of materials excavated is now such as to require that we should erect

the watch-tower of philosophy in the midst. The ages were not created to repeat the work of ages gone.

The *Thought*, the moral law of the universe, is progress. Every generation that passes idly over the earth without adding to that progress by one degree, remains uninscribed upon the register of humanity, and the succeeding generation tramples its ashes as dust.

Every period has its ministry and mission. The special prepares the way for the general, which alone is important, uniform, and European. Until now we have collected facts, and grouped them according to the isolated observations of a year, an age, or a nation. We have recognised the connection existing between the facts composing the various groups, without looking for any superior link to unite one group with another. We have deduced partial consequences, and, in short, studied the arithmetic, the geometry of the human knowledge. It is time to found its universal algebra, to establish a series of formula regarding the action of the human intellect, to discover the method of verifying them by history, and of applying them to every branch of knowledge. Such should be the study and mission of the nineteenth century and of those to follow.

The question now is, does the bare representation of historic reality, a mere materialistic fidelity to facts, assist us in our task? What is an isolated fact, if contemplated alone, but a flower in the field

of truth? It may delight us by its beauty or perfume, but that perfume is evanescent, and the sun which hails its loveliness to-day will shine to-morrow on its bare and withered stem.

It is our part to use facts as the geometrician uses the three given points to design the complete circle. They are of two aspects: the one, internal, rational, and immutable; the other, external, material, and contingent.

Though void of apparent connection, they are all the result of uniform laws, and resemble those antediluvian fossil remains from the study of which the geologist recomposes the entire skeleton. They are the fragments of an edifice which it is our business to rebuild; the detached sentences of an oracle which nature, like the sybil, has placed before us in order that we, by recombining them, may discover her governing and eternal law. Such is the true use of facts, and from such an elevation must we learn to regard them.

But it may be said that this is a labour to be entrusted solely to philosophy; that the nature and the forms of poetic language refuse to adapt themselves to these severe contemplations, to the highest universal truth.

Thus do we again fall into the old error that would condemn poetry to delight without instructing, and exile it from the universe, its kingdom.

Why then speak of poetical reform? . . . . Poetry can never be regenerated, except by elevating

it to the height of philosophy, the life, centre, and secret of modern civilisation.

. . . . . .

So long as there be a sun in heaven—so long as the eye shall have tears to shed—so long as there be loveliness in woman, or a spirit that whispers to man, *thou wast born for progress*, and this spirit have power to produce martyrs,—poetry will be the law of humanity. Nature has made of the human heart a poet that naught but the conviction of impotence can silence, and the age of Bonaparte and of Grecian liberty is surely no age of impotence or silent slavery. The three names of Bonaparte, Byron, and Gréece suggest poetry enough for ten generations. . . .

. . . . . .

Poets therefore we shall have; fewer perhaps, because the progress of civilisation will open up new paths, and afford new modes of manifestation to mediocrity, but they will be all the more sublime, because this, of all forms of expression the most boundless and powerful, will be reserved for true genius alone.

But if we warp and torture poetry by exiling it from the loftier regions of philosophy, and destroy its independence by restricting it to the real; if, while we hail the poet as the heaven-inspired son of genius and lawgiver of the soul, we say to him, Hold! even though nature with her thousand voices bid thee spread thy wing and hail thee king of the universe, yet hold! never depart from facts; then all hope of

literary regeneration will vanish, and our modern Italian civilisation will never possess a poetry of its own.

Ask of the ashes of the few poets whose names have survived the ages, wherefore they have been hailed as great by time and the nations. They will answer you from out their sepulchres, "We were great because we were creators; we penetrated the mysteries of Humanity, and the conception of Humanity is the creation of philosophy. But as the voice of philosophy, speaking through the medium of axioms and of principles, sounds obscure and harsh; and while it awakens to reflection the thinking few, does but chill the multitude born only to feel; we invested its lessons with the loveliness of form and colour to render them acceptable to mortals.

"We studied the generations of men, we studied individuals and facts, because the *real* invariably contains the germs of truth, and the teaching of example is decisive among mankind; but we studied them from on high, shedding upon them the light of our own genius, and constituting ourselves the interpreters of those universal laws which govern all things.

"The multitude learns through the heart. Study the way to reach that heart; study the material world as a means of understanding the moral; deduce the unknown from the known; and then reveal your discoveries to the world. So shall you become great, even as we were."

The existence of the drama, as of every other

form of poetry amongst us, depends upon the fulfilment of these conditions. Literature is essentially one, both in origin and purpose. Variety of means, and the diversity of the human faculties, all of which have to be gratified, exercised, and excited, have caused its division into varieties or species, and given rise to distinctions, just and true in the outset, but which have been rendered hurtful and dangerous by being again reduced into minute sub-divisions, to each of which pedantry has assigned special laws and impassable frontiers.

In literature, as in civil government, the various ranks touch one another, because they all converge towards a common centre, although the services they fulfil are different, and more or less important, popular, or direct. . . . All that is essential is to avoid uselessly multiplying the number of functions, or requiring similar attributes from different classes or species.

History collects events, registers the names and deeds of individuals, and presents them as materials for the exercise of the human intellect. The drama, a purely philosophic creation, acting upon the human mind with all the superior power of representation over description, is the only form of literature rivaling the art of the orator in its direct action upon the people. Hence an idea of *perfectionment*, of resolution into simpler and more elementary forms, and of a higher duty to be fulfilled, is inseparable from it. Far more than history does it soar above our

human destinies and the mysteries of existence; it is the special office of the dramatic poet to extract the hidden element or spirit of facts, and make known the bearing and lesson of every series of events. In short, while history chiefly presents to us the palpable and visible aspect of the exterior world, it is the office of the drama to evolve the idea from the symbol, and illumine us with a reflex of the moral world.

The system of founding the drama upon historical reality is then exclusive, insufficient, and incomplete. The basis of any form of literature must be a principle. History is not a principle, but an expression, an interpretation, a comment upon a principle. It is a series of experiments demonstrating the truth of the principle; a collection of sentences pronounced by the law; but it is not, and cannot be the law itself. We must therefore go back to discover the law and the principle by which the drama is governed.

To what?

ON THE HISTORICAL DRAMA.

II.

"*I tempt none*
But with the truth."
BYRON.

THE universe is concentric. Unity is the primary, necessary, and unalterable law both of the physical and moral world. A few principles suffice to rule the harmony of the material world; one sun illumines it; but its light, refracted by an atmosphere more or less dense, assumes various hues.

Few, also, are the principles that govern the moral world, the internal aspect of the universe. Various and multiple are its incidents and combinations, inextricably and strangely linked; but truth, the soul's sun, at the summit of the cone, diffuses its rays on every side, lovely, pure, eternal, and immutable, although more or less clearly reflected by the ages, or the waves of incident or chance. This is the pivot upon which the dramatic art will turn in the coming European epoch.

At first sight, the world, with its various peoples and all the events that crowd and press upon our view, reveal to us only a thousand material phenomena and combinations, crossing, opposing, and combating each other in confusion.

Facts clash and shock together like the fragments of Leucipus, without law or method. Generations arise, crowd upon and engulf each other like the waves of a stormy sea. Whither go they? Whence come they? You know not. You are yourself an enigma in the midst of enigmæ, surrounded by a chaos of facts, each of which has a name, a centre, and an independent system of its own. But the universal law is silent, the one general principle and common aim are buried in darkness.

Up to this point philosophy is but a collection of isolated observations; history, a burial-ground wherein the epitaphs of the dead are arranged in chronological order; poetry mere metrical description, or an idle pastime. . . . . You dwell, in short, in the narrow and barren sphere of facts.

'And yet a secret instinct whispers within you that this is not the apogee of human thought; you feel the necessity of laying hold of something beyond the visible and material; and perceive that there must be a general plan, a parent thought, a law, presiding over the Gothic complications of the edifice, because unity is inseparable from existence.

But once dare to advance upon the path of pure intellect, to penetrate the reason of things, and search out the causes of effects, and the scene will quickly assume a new aspect. A multitude of threads will present themselves to guide you through the labyrinth. Though at first they appear twisted, involved,

and inextricably entangled; yet study, observe, select, arrange them, and you will find that many of those threads are connected and draw together.

Thus do many facts bear a common stamp and family resemblance. Group together all those which start from a common origin, and proceed along parallel lines towards uniform results; be careful to distinguish the two elements characteristic of every fact, by separating all that is certain, fixed, and immutable, from all that is transitory, various, and accidental; extract, in short, the unknown quantity, after the method of the algebraist, and then, when the facts are thus spread out before you, divided, arranged, and classified like plants into families, and into races like human beings, they will cease to present the appearance of the mere dead letter, they will assume a life and soul, like Chaos at the word of God. . . . . Facts and principles; form and essence; the body and soul of the universe—such are the two grand divisions into which all existing things may be classed.

The relationship between the two is intimate, substantial, and inviolable. No isolated fact occurs without antecedents or consequences, or by chance, unimpelled or governed by a principle. No principle can be revealed without being translated by one or more facts.

Existence as a general phenomenon is a condition which precedes every other; but existence cannot be conceived without a definite manner of being, re-

sulting in certain inevitable relations between all existing beings. Since, then, there is a necessary and indestructible connection between cause and effect, the laws which are coeval with the general fact of existence are anterior to, and sovereign over, all the secondary facts flowing from that first general fact. Hence, every fact occurring through the action of some powerful cause, necessarily preordained towards a certain aim, evinces more or less clearly the action of one or other of these laws, and forms one line of the mighty page revealing to those who rightly read a truth, or portion of the truth.

In other words, every fact bears within it the germ of an idea, and every idea, being linked to an infinity of other ideas, is a guide to the discovery of some one of the general rules by which all facts are governed.

. . . . . .

Suppose it were possible to take away facts and leave the intellect to stand alone. Something would yet remain, but this something would be, not the universe, but a mute, interminable abyss, from the darkness of which a few abstractions would emerge; where principles, isolated upon their solitary throne, and incapable of being reduced to action, would eternally revolve around their own axis.

Take away principles, and let facts remain. They would be like skeletons confusedly stowed away unclassified in a museum. Life would remain aimless and purposeless, resembling the treadmill of an

English prison. The world would remain, but like a loose page upon which certain strange, unconnected, and unintelligible lines had been inscribed by destiny.

Reunite facts with principles, and you have the universe; the beautiful, the fecund; a very miracle in its teeming sequence of events, wherein naught that is once accomplished is lost to humanity, wherein man is urged to activity by hope, wherein every drop of the blood of the martyr or the ink of the sage is weighed in the balance of the future, wherein every age builds up a portion of the temple of truth.

Now, all of these things are a part of the truth. Facts, principles,—all that the world contains,—are truth; for the existence of error is merely negative, a deviation of the human intellect regarding one only of the many aspects of things.

But all is not equally true, either in manner or degree. Truth is one, but, like the ray passing through the prism, it is broken and decomposed, and assumes various appearances in its passage throughout time and events. Facts exist, and symbolise a part of the human enigma. They translate the passions, and reveal the forces working within us by their results. Therefore, to those who reject or neglect the solemn teachings of facts, man, life, and the decrees of universal necessity will ever remain unknown.

Do they therefore constitute the truth itself, or are they not rather the means of reaching truth?

There is an absolute, necessary, and eternal truth,

which the generations of men have been seeking for ages, and which is the end and aim of all our thoughts. This truth is high above the precarious, contingent, and relative truth of facts. It is uniform, universal, spiritual, and independent of all things, save of those laws laid down *ab eterno* for the government of the world and of the human race. To us in Europe, where circumstances, the progress of civilisation, and, above all, the sacred bond of suffering, have produced a community of wants, affections, and desires, this highest truth speaks the same language to all who feel and strive to live nobly.

But the language of facts is varied as the languages of men, in which the same elements are combined in methods so many and diverse that we lose sight of their primitive root and common nature.

. . . . . .

It is true that there is a science of facts, but it is a science of effects, and addresses the senses in their own language. . . . . Like all material things, facts present various sides to the observer, and it happens with them as with hieroglyphics: each man understands and explains them differently, according to the influence of systems or blind beliefs upon his mind. Now, if truth were in its essence as multiple and various as they, what hope would there be of ever concluding the long, obstinate, and terrible struggle that has gone on ever since the world began between mind and matter, between the human conscience and error?

[Yet the impossibility of ending this struggle is the necessary consequence of the doctrine which denies the existence of a higher power ruling facts, and views them without relation to their general governing laws. And they who deny these laws do accept this result—for it is the boast of the philosopher never to shrink from the logical consequences of his theory—and they solemnly, and, what is worse, coldly condemn the race to the alternate dominion of the two principles of good and evil, and the peoples to a sort of moral see-saw, now raising them towards heaven, and now sinking them to hell.]

But the human conscience cancels their decree, and sounds a hymn of hope in the souls of those tempered by nature to suffer and to do.

Despair not thus of men or things. . . . . Constancy is the complement of all the other human virtues. Individuals suffer and die, but civilisation and the human race live. The great in heart and mind create others in their own image. Nations are educated through suffering, mankind is purified through sorrow. The power of creating obstacles to progress is human and partial. Omnipotence is with the ages.

This faith in the existence of a truth capable of producing the happiness of the race, with the hope of sooner or later attaining it, is inspired by conscience, and taught by the instinct of the human heart. It is afterwards developed by reason and

judgment; its truth has been demonstrated by history, and sanctified by thousands of martyrs, from Socrates to Galileo. Nevertheless, it is still contradicted and scorned as a dream. . . . . When this is done through pride of system or an affectation of philosophic calm, it is deserving only of contempt; when from the weariness of men who have long and cruelly suffered, God help them on their journey through life, for their doctrine is one leading only to death.

But I, from the study of the times, and of the state of literature, have learned that the doctrine of indefinite progress is the philosophical expression of the popular Thought, generated by the urgency of their need, and by an inward instinct of power, and I find this to be the doctrine of the great and strong of soul; therefore do I strive to preach it as best I may, and urge upon the Italians to preach it with me as a religion admirably adapted to combine and direct all the affections towards a great and sublime aim.

The primary truth of which I have spoken does then exist and govern all things. . . . . It is contained in the *principles* of which facts are the symbols and material expression. It is the universal soul, the central fire, from which scintillate innumerable sparks forth into the world of facts; but like diamonds in the mine, they are only visible to those who disengage them from their earthy covering, and bring them to the light.

The knowledge of facts is the first grade of

initiation into the mysteries of human science. They are the individuals of a world whose true law must be sought in the species.

To reassume: There is then an historical truth, or truth of facts. There is a moral truth, or truth of principles. The second is to the first what the whole is to a part, the original to the translation. The one is the principle, the other is its development and application. The first manifests itself in *reality*, the second in *truth;* but reality is but the shadow of truth, as truth is the shadow of God on earth.

By which of these two descriptions of truth should the drama of the Italian Romanticists be governed?

It is singular that all the many Italian critics who have written upon this subject have reduced the question to the choice between these two terms, and that none of them should have discovered that both of these truths are essential to dramatic art, and that to disjoin them is to separate the soul from the body. . . . . It appears as if, accustomed to regard literature as an art calculated for mere amusement, they did not even suspect that the drama would ever become a species of popular pulpit, the chair of the philosophy of humanity.

. . . . . .

[After describing the advance already made in the right direction by Alfieri, Niccolini, and notably by Manzoni, Mazzini continues:—]

But so long as dramatic writers are governed by

an exclusive conception, and proceed upon either of these systems alone, no true *romantic* drama can exist. Let it therefore become the connecting link between the truth of principles and the truth of facts: reality its general field, truth its constant end and aim. . . . . Like the witch of Endor, it must call up the shadows of the past, but in order to compel them to reveal the future; or rather to reveal the laws which caused the past, govern the present, and will create the future. Such is the office of the dramatist. . . . . There are two laws permanently superior to every fact The one is the last result of the civil, religious, and political condition of a given age; the sum of all those characteristics by which that age is distinguished from every other. It manifests and expresses the degree of intellectual development, the method of an age or period; it is the general law of the epoch to which a given fact belongs, and with it every idea deduced from that fact is in some way connected.

The other, the expression and representation of the highest intellectual development of which the race is capable, is the *principle* dominating every fact of a similar order; it is the universal law of humanity, to which the laws of each particular epoch are more or less consonant and harmonious, according as civilisation either advances, recedes, or remains stationary for a time.

This, then, is the problem of the *romantic* drama: To what extent does the fact selected for its subject,

and the idea represented by that fact, manifest and express the law of the epoch? and what relation exists between this law of the epoch and the universal law of humanity?

The romantic drama is the representation of a fraction of the universe. The universe is composed of facts and principles. The drama must embrace both; it must unfold and develop a fact, and teach a principle; it must present us with an historical picture containing a lesson applicable to humanity. The scope and aim of the art is this—the maximum of moral efficacy; and no dramatic writer can attain it unless he so represent the fact as to express the degree indicated by that fact upon the thermometer of civilisation, and the proportion it bears to moral truth.

A *principle* explained by a *fact;* the *truth* taught by *reality:* such is the *romantic* drama, of which as yet we have but the indications, but which we undoubtedly shall possess before the nineteenth century have completed its course—the moral world manifested through the medium of the physical—heaven revealed to earth.

. . . . . .

One example of the possibility of a drama combining the representation of a fact with the manifestation of a moral principle, by which to measure the idea emanating from the fact itself, is offered by the *Don Carlos* of Schiller.*

* I select this one among the dramatic works of Schiller, not because

There are three things to be considered in treating the subject according to the method described.

The fact itself.

The general law of the epoch rendering the fact possible, and explaining its existence.

The general law of humanity, or the moral principle by which our judgment must be governed.

The struggle between these two laws upon the field of reality constitutes the subject; the temporary triumph of the law of the epoch over the law of humanity constitutes the catastrophe.

Three orders of symbols or personages had therefore to be introduced into the drama.

I think it superior to the others, nor to be presented as in every respect a model to dramatic writers, but because he wrote it as a labour of love, in the fervour of youth, when he was inspired and influenced solely by his own heart and genius, and he has transfused into it more of the noble and generous passion of his own soul, and of the *ideal* he worshipped, and which is destined, come what may, to be the religion of the future.

The studies of his later years, although they did not quench that fervour, yet taught him to govern and to dominate it, and to write dramas more to the taste of those who seek the literary artist rather than the man in his works. I know that literary judges find many faults in *Don Carlos*, most of them trifling and puerile, emanating from men who dispense praise and blame in virtue of a system which I wholly reject and deny. The true defect of this drama—seldom noticed—is this: that Schiller has rather sought to pourtray the arts of Philip's courtiers and the tyranny of superstition, than the despotism of Philip himself. The Philip of Schiller is certainly not the Spanish Tiberius painted by Alfieri. Perhaps he was somewhat influenced by a certain grandeur cast over him by history, or perhaps his own angelic nature shrank from depicting a soul so utterly dark. This defect, however, which might easily be altered without altering the purpose or plan of the drama, does not affect my view of it. The historical errors it contains were the errors of the time, and are equally visible in the *Philip* of Alfieri and in all the other plays written upon the same subject.

The first, belonging to the actual fact to be represented—Philip, Carlos, Isabella, etc.—were themselves historical personages, and it was therefore necessary they should be copies.

The second, intended to represent the Spain of the sixteenth century, with all her characteristic passions of superstition, pride of rank, monarchical fanaticism, and voluptuousness,—Alba, Domingo d'Eboli, etc.—are drawn from the contemplation and study of the epoch.

And with these, a writer who had proposed to himself to write his drama upon the historical system, as understood by the first Romanticists, would probably have been satisfied. But Schiller did not stop here. In his eyes, the poet was—as indeed he really is—a man standing midway between the past and future. He was not only an artist; he was, above all, a citizen of the epoch which gave him birth, and he foresaw its destiny.

He wrote for a world yet in its youth, in the dawn of its development, and awaiting the revelation of its idea; therefore, whilst others busied themselves in endeavouring to reproduce the *idealistic* school, or falsifying the human instinct within them which linked them to their century, and the Divine instinct which urged them to progress, sought to transform themselves by retrogression into men of the fourteenth or fifteenth centuries; he felt himself consecrated by his genius to a religious mission of instilling high principles and glorious hopes into the hearts of the

multitude, so that—the work of destruction confided to the eighteenth century being once completed—they might be preserved from uncertainty and scepticism as to the future. . . . . .

And thus it was that he conceived the grand figure of Posa.

Posa is a type. He is intended to represent the principle of right, of freedom of thought, of progress, the soul of the universe. His first appearance upon the scene is as if an angel had descended into the midst of hell. A breath of superhuman virtue appears to diffuse itself around, a sense of a solemn hope, and a calmness as of revelation, for he is one whose heart beats with sympathy for all mankind, whose love encircles humanity and the races of the future.

Great in faith and sacrifice, strong in absolute purity of conscience, and a constancy beyond proof, he advances upon the path traced out for him by the Power that invested genius with its divine mission, calm, trusting, and resigned as one who has renounced the happiness and hopes of life, and bidden adieu to the brief applause and the joy and glory of triumph, to all things save a *principle*, and martyrdom for its sake.

One might fancy him only human in form and speech, a type of perfection created by poetic inspiration merely to display it to mankind, and bid them despair of its realisation, were it not for a vague sense of suffering which reveals itself by occa-

sional signs or touches throughout the action or dialogue, always showing itself in his contact with others; were it not for his tears, the embrace bestowed on Carlo, the almost maternal tenderness for the friend of his early youth, and the yearning after the affections of the heart, proving that he too is born of woman, and destined, like his brothers in misfortune, to suffer and to die; that his soul was created full of noble passions, of gentle affections, and of love, but that he had crushed and killed every hope and illusion within him for the sake of a great idea, and voluntarily laid waste that fervid soul, in order to raise therein an altar to humanity, so soon as the lesson had been revealed to him that man was not born for himself alone.

But the intense power of loving which is found in such natures, and which is in fact an aspiration of the soul towards infinite beauty, a ray of warmth and light striving to diffuse itself over all creation, is compelled to concentrate itself upon some definite and sensible object, or it would be lost and dispersed in infinity. It is as a flood of rays—I am reluctant to use a material illustration—given out from the centre of the heart, which, encountering a fitting object in their path, encircle it, bathe it in their brightest and purest tints, thence to pass onward in *tangential* line, diffusing their light over the creation that is beyond.

This sublime friendship is a revelation of our own era, and, as far as I know, vouchsafed to Schiller alone.

He has availed himself of it most exquisitely as a means of re-linking his *type* with mankind; by causing him to attach himself to the youthful Carlos, as to a sort of symbol of his own religious idea, and intermediate between that idea and humanity; for it is the whole world that Posa loves in Carlos.*

I know that many literary professors and journalists have accused Schiller of failing in respect for historical truth, by investing a personage of the 16th century with the sentiments of his own mind and his own epoch. Let me answer this by recalling the power that raised up the noble figure of Petus Thraseus amidst the infamies of the Roman patricians and plebeians during the reign of Nero, and inspired Cres-

* Carlos also is a mere poetic creation, for both history and the documents collected by Llorente, show him to have been rude, ferocious, and threatened with insanity. But the uncertainty of the information that existed with regard to his character, in the days of Schiller and Alfieri, was such as might excuse them in the eyes of those good gentlemen who exert themselves to prove that William Tell never really existed, or that the sacred poem of Dante owed its origin to self-love, and not to love of country.

What high or useful results they anticipate from thus endeavouring to overthrow the altar upon which the young are accustomed to burn incense to the image of virtue, I know not. Mankind will long be sustained by such veneration in their worship of God. Therefore am I very grateful to Schiller for creating a new symbol of virtue, and feel no gratitude whatever to those who would overthrow it on the authority of some chronicle they have freshly routed up; for the true importance of historical exactitude lies in a right appreciation of the age, its personages, and its civil, political, and religious condition and character, and not in the exact portraiture of an uninfluential individual; and true artistic greatness lies in discovering the ruling principle of the historic fact, and displaying that in its broadest light. In short, it was not the tyranny of Carlos, but of Philip II., which it was important to set before us, and this is only rendered more appalling by the contrast.

centius with the conception of unity under Otto III., nine centuries before the possibility of its realisation. Genius and love are of every age. Great souls, inspired by these passions, are to be found in every epoch,—unhappy indeed if the spirit of their age be against them—but humanity is never utterly disinherited of their presence. And these *literati* should remember that Philip II. began to reign while the ashes of Padilla were yet warm, and the memory was yet fresh of the *War of the Communes*, and the heroic defence of Toledo conducted by a woman.*

The law of the age, however, forbade that the principle of which Posa is the symbol should govern the masses, or be reduced by them to action. And for this reason Schiller, fashioning his creation in harmony with this law, causes Posa to apply all his energies to the endeavour to instil into the heart of one of royal race those principles of eternal right, which, had they been sanctioned and promoted by the authority of dominion, might have educated the people to comprehend, carry out, and watch over their observance themselves. And the caprice and suspicion of a despotism which had deprived him of his bride, of the affection of his father, and of the confidence of his courtiers, would naturally appear peculiarly odious to Carlos.

His pure and impassioned nature, unbiassed by aught but love and sorrow—imaginative, trusting, and disinterested—was easily open to every noble illusion

* Maria Pacheco.

or hope for the future. The seed sown by genius, in order to bear fruit, must be cast upon a soil already prepared by faith and courage; and faith and courage are the prerogative of the young.

In further illustration of the character of the epoch, which forbade all action upon the masses, and only rendered it possible to influence individuals, Posa is represented as endeavouring to act upon Philip himself, as seeking whether it be possible that the soul of a despot should ever enter into a compact with truth. But even enthusiasm is powerless to fertilise the desert—and from the moment when we see Posa cherishing that illusion, and striving to infuse life into a corpse, we feel within us that he is lost.

From that moment the proportions of the picture enlarge: the struggle is now between two principles, of which the personages of the drama are but the blind agents.

The one principle is symbolised in Posa, the other —whose secret influence you are made to feel throughout every episode or incident of the action—is rendered more solemn and fearful by its remaining occult and invisible until the last scene, when it is suddenly revealed in the person of the grand Inquisitor, old as authority, blind as superstition, and inexorable as fate.

Was it possible that such a struggle, in such a court as that of Philip II., should end otherwise than by the martyrdom of Posa?

He dies; but one feels that his great soul is still

hovering over and dominating the scene, that he is the martyr of a principle, and that that principle is destined to endure.

There are numberless artistic beauties to be observed in this drama, but that which I am specially desirous of noting here is the manner in which the great public interests concerned—the Reformation, the revolution of Flanders, and the general moral progress which were the result—are intertwined with the individual interest felt for Isabella and Carlos; as well as that spirit of universality, which, by raising the individual fact to the height of the grand struggle, renewed in every epoch between the law of that epoch and the law of humanity, touches a cord which continues to vibrate long after the emotion caused by the special fact has passed away, leaving behind a grand general idea, applicable to every fact of a certain class or order. The spectator is made to enter so thoroughly into the depths of the subject, as to seize and comprehend all the minute threads connecting it with the laws of our moral nature, and is therefore carried away beyond the limits of the individual action, or particular plot, into the infinite field of pure reason.

It is a peculiarity of the *classicist* drama that the attention of the spectator is completely and exclusively occupied by the individual represented; the impression made, consumes itself and is exhausted within the circle of the plot or action itself.

The impression produced by the mere representation of an isolated fact, whether historical or imagi-

nary, is restricted to the amount of interest excited by the fortunes of the personages who live or die upon the stage; because the arrangement of the whole is organised without reference to any philosophical aim, and calls for no intellectual exertion on the part of the spectator.

And this is what the *Classicists* style dramatic interest.

But the *romantic* drama, as I understand it, the drama founded upon the highest truth—the truth of principles—converts the audience into a vast jury called upon to judge the fact by the law. It inspires a profound conviction of the eternity of a maxim or truth, and leaves a grave and durable impression behind, like the impression produced by witnessing a solemn act of worship.

There is a precept of Kant's which appears to me admirably to define the moral mission of Young Europe: *Act in such wise that every maxim of your own will may obtain the force of a principle of general legislation.* And I would say to the dramatic writer, Represent the fact you select for your subject in such a manner that the special result may tend to the recognition of one of the great moral or historical laws of the universe. The whole history of the world is the history of the struggle between the forces of individual will and the supreme law of humanity; even as the agreement and identification of these two principles is the secret of the world's destiny.

Such is the problem of civilisation, when to be

solved God alone can say, but certainly to be solved. And by that time the drama, and possibly every other form of literature, may become useless or even dangerous.

Meanwhile, it must be the mission of the drama, if it would keep pace with our requirements, to represent this struggle. It must be an emanation of humanity, a reflection of that universal mind which religion translates through *conscience*, philosophy through *ideas*, history through *facts*, and art through *images* and *symbols*.

How this will be done, I know not; but I have pointed out one among many methods which Schiller perceived and proved to be possible.

I believe the final scope and aim of art to be the promotion and development of civilisation among the multitude, and I believe that with the multitude, as with children, and indeed with every individual, the faculties are more fully and effectively developed by the exercise of deducing the corollaries of a fact, and discovering the character of an idea for themselves, than by any absolute, exclusive, or one-sided instruction.

I find that in the greater number of *classicist* dramas the people remain too isolated and apart; they are idle spectators, and nothing more. The fault lies partly, perhaps, in a system of dramatic illusion, falsely conceived and applied; but still more in the state of things which made of literature an aristocratic institution, reducing the people to a sphere of inertia inconsistent with the truth of fact.

But a nation cannot be condemned to ostracism, nor contented by a stage so arranged as to become a mere sensual amusement. And, indeed, if the theatre were always to be regarded as a repetition of the *circenses*, and destitute of every purpose of useful instruction, I, for one, should vote for its abolition.

It is certain that the characteristic of our epoch, and therefore of our new literature, is in the highest degree *popular*.

The people are eager for progress, and desirous of the guidance of genius; but if this be not given, they will continue to advance alone, guessing their path as best they may, at times choosing the right direction, but too often going astray.

And the drama—even though fashioned after the old models, disfigured by authors who have stolen everything from the Greeks except the habits and modes of life which rendered their theatre a supplement to their other institutions, and have learned from the French to make of it the amusement of noble triflers, and the ornament of a court,—ever delights the people, and keeps their attention alive throughout all the alternations of the action, until the catastrophe puts an end to the drama and their emotion together. Or if, indeed, the attempt be made to awaken any lasting passion, and to produce an impression upon the mind of the spectator calculated to endure beyond the walls of the theatre, it is a negative passion, a rage to destroy rather than a desire to build up: the sole object appears to be to inspire hatred.

Such are many of the dramas of Voltaire, which, in fact, may be said to sum up and represent the law of the 18th century, a century of reaction and destruction. Such are almost all the dramas of Alfieri, which awaken within us a torturing sense of restless rage and fury, approaching the confines of desperation, and investing the soul with darkness. . . . . It seems as if he had inscribed his tragedies with the word Victor Hugo saw written above the portal of Notre Dame—ΑΝΑΓΚΗ.

Nevertheless, Alfieri was, in the highest sense of the word, an innovator. He transformed—if not the form and method—at least the meaning and purpose of the drama. . . . . .

He, too, felt the necessity of rejecting mere realism, and rejected the records which describe Carlos as madly ferocious, for the sake of elevating the oppressed and degrading the oppressor.

He also was led by the law of contrasts to place in the centre of this picture of ferocious despotism and cowardly servility, a personage representing the eternal reason and justice of things, and protesting, in the name of down-trodden humanity, against the tyrant that trampled upon its rights.

But Perez is but a poor interpreter of so great a principle; the conception of immortal right but flashes before one in the midst of the darkness, like a ray of sunlight in a prison, only to disappear, leaving you alone in despair—the brief but useless contrast seeming but to reveal a sentence fatal to the destinies of humanity.

Not so in Schiller. In the midst of the horror of the catastrophe there is a revelation in the heart, which, like a flower blooming upon a tomb, and telling its tale of affectionate remembrance and hope, awakens within you the conviction that men like Posa are never the martyrs of a false principle. Even from that silent corpse, lying there like an expiatory victim, at sight of which the monarch of half the world turns pale with the paleness of guilt in the presence of its judge, a voice of power goes forth to future ages declaring alike the history and the death-warrant of tyranny. All this and more is to be felt in reading and re-reading *Don Carlos*. In the midst of our tears we hear a voice of sublime consolation, and feel a thrill of victory run through us; the sense of a faith that survives amid ruin, in the profound conviction of a supreme law of progress, declaring,—I shall arise in greater loveliness through martyrdom, for death is the parent of resurrection.

Perhaps such sensations are mine alone, and it may be that I cannot teach others to feel them; but yet I would entreat my youthful countrymen to read once more these two dramas of Alfieri and Schiller, without distrusting the verdict of the heart, and unbiassed by scholastic prejudice, and I think that at least two-thirds of them will feel with me. To the other third I have nothing to say.

I might quote other instances in order to show how various are the methods by which genius may follow out the idea and aim I would prefix to the modern

drama, that of uniting the philosophically exact representation of history and the epoch with the still more important expression of the truth of principles, a truth which has ever influenced alike individuals and generations, tacitly and unobserved at times, but now recognised, studied, or at least forefelt. The Goetz Von Berlichingen of Göthe appears to me to be founded upon the same dramatic basis or plan, without the introduction of an unique symbol of this law or power of the highest truth. And I think the analysis of this drama would give us an example of the method by which a writer may concentrate the expression of both the laws in one single individual. Goetz, the man of the 16th century, while preserving the colouring of his times, yet reflects the light of that truth which is the law of humanity. He appears before us like a statue of the expiring feudal world illumined by the sunlight of the dawning civilisation, —a symbol standing between two epochs.

But since my article is perhaps already too long, the example of Don Carlos will, I hope, suffice to show that the means will never be wanting to true genius; and to all save true genius, were I to be judge in literary matters, I would forbid not only the dramatic, but every other form of poetry.

. . . . . .

History itself no longer stops short at the materialism of facts. The events, records, and teachings of three thousand years, and the study of *relative* truth, as shown by each people in their relics, chronicles, re-

ligion, and the progress of their art, have enabled us to raise a corner of the veil that covers *absolute* truth.

We have reached a period when immaturity of method would be in contradiction with the actual maturity of the world.

The human race has for centuries been undergoing a series of transformations. The real man had, to a certain extent, been lost beneath the strange garb in which he has been clothed by circumstances, prejudices, and political institutions.

Where is the strong hand to strip him of this coat of many colours, and place him before us, freed from all these incumbrances, and realising, as far as possible, the intent and ideal of his nature, and bid us hail the elect of creation ?

Open the page of history—you will find the pagan man, the feudal man, the man of the 17th century, the man of the North, and the man of the South ; but high above each of these, all of which are but the representation of a certain degree of intellectual development, and the product of the moral and physical conditions peculiar to a given nation or period, stands the man of all ages and all lands—man, the first-born of nature, the image of God, created for infinite progress ; man, the centre of the universe, viewed in his immortal part, in the fulness of his moral powers ; man, neither Italian, English, nor French—the citizen of the vast globe, miniature of all the eternal, universal, invariable laws—MAN.

This is the pivot of the modern *social* drama, which

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we have hitherto named *romantic*, in order to be better understood at first by those accustomed only to recognise two banners in the literary camp.

It is to this height that genius must remount if it desire to give us the drama of the epoch. The diameter of the new dramatic sphere must touch the past at one extremity, and reach the confines of the future with the other. By these signs shall Young Europe know its poet—the poet for whom the *Romanticists* have but cleared the path and prepared the way.

III.

And in the meantime?

During the interval that must elapse between the hesitating efforts of the present, and the day on which Europe shall hail the genius born to interpret the presentiment of the epoch, what are we to do? Are we merely to await and invoke its coming in uncertainty, hoping that it may arise amongst us like a meteor, with no gradual dawn of light or colour to herald its approach?

I believe, as I have said, that where a people shall be gathered together, and prepared to receive the Spirit of God, the Spirit of God will descend.

In primitive epochs, when the mind of the nation is either shrouded in darkness or veiled in dubious light, while the soil is virgin of all literary imitation, it is the office of genius, drawing its inspiration from the sources and origin of the nation that gave it birth, and

the tendencies they reveal, to found the national literature of its own will and authority, and to constitute itself king of its future art. God created Dante and Italian literature together.

But when the literature of a nation has passed through the myriad experiments, applications, and developments of its primary conception, by which it has become exhausted and consumed,—when its originality has been lost, and its fecundity has given place to impotence,—the poetry of great minds to silence, and the veneration of the people for art and artists has been converted into indifference,—the work of renovation can be performed by the critic only; and to criticism, rightly understood and applied, belongs the double office of educating the people to appreciate genius, and of inspiring genius with faith—two conditions without which no true literature is possible.

Lessing precedes Schiller.

Our literature has unquestionably, as it appears to me, entered upon this second period.

Our greatest present want, then, is true criticism —a necessary part of the education required to invigorate and renew the national mind now enslaved. We want an Italian School.

But it has been fully proved that no Italian school can exist in this 19th century which shall attempt to isolate itself from the European intellectual movement; nor can a new literature be created by an attempt to return to its original sources, without

any link with the times which immediately precede it.

The literature demanded by the times will probably be *national* in form and *European* in conception. And if it be true that the poet cannot achieve the first requisite without study of the original sources of our literature and our national traditions, the second demands a long and earnest examination of the various tendencies manifested by the writers of all ages and of all countries.

Hence the necessity of translations.

Translations, it is true, are not wanting among us; but the choice of them is undirected by any unity of idea, unaccompanied by any criticism of the various works tracing the ruling idea of each. The greater number of our translations are made merely for a purpose of amusement, and not of education. They do but accumulate a disorganised mass of materials, and lead the young to the inconsiderate imitation of this or that model. They neither tend to promote an Italian school, nor transmit, in well-digested form, the legacy of the epochs and schools of literature passing away or extinct. I could wish—and what I am about to propose with regard to the drama should be applied to every branch of the intellectual development of mankind—I could wish to see such of our Italian youth as are possessed of heart, intellect, and faith in the future, organise a collection of all those Italian or foreign dramatic works which exhibit most clearly any special tendency or form of the drama,

the idea of an epoch, or the religion of a people, accompanied by critical studies illustrative of their development throughout the life and works of the writers, so as to form a complete course of dramatic literature, intermingling principles with facts, and theory with example—a documentary history of the drama.

The collection, preceded by a disquisition upon the origin of the drama, and the intimate connection (hitherto unnoticed or denied) existing between it and religion in primitive epochs, would commence with the Indian and Persian drama, and descend, passing through the Greek and some fragments of the Roman drama, and including some of the mysteries of the Middle Ages, down to the works of English, Spanish, French and German writers, including even certain contemporary poems, especially some by Polish exiles,* wavering between the lyric and dramatic form, and appearing like phantoms wandering upon the borders of two worlds, and proclaiming alike the destruction of one form of the drama and the aspiration towards another.

Among the many authors to be comprised in this collection, three alone perhaps—Æschylus, Shakspeare, and Schiller—would require to be translated entire. With all the others selections might suffice.

The collection should be arranged according to historical order. The discourses prefixed to each volume, or at times to each drama, would endeavour

* *Dziady*, by Michiewicz. *The Comedy of Death*, by Krasinsky.

to disengage its elementary idea,* and to calculate its importance, its dangers, and its advantages. The lives of the writers should be written with a view to verify, by psychological analysis, how much of that predominating or vital element should be attributed to the influence of the times, and how much to the individual character and circumstances of the writer.

The translations should be absolutely faithful and exact, without a trace of mutilation. All of them, except those from the Greek writers, should be executed in prose; for it is only by the most powerful writers that the poetry of the original can be rendered into the poetry of another language, and less powerful writers invariably substitute their own; but the truly powerful are rare amongst us, and apparently unused to translate.†

The criticisms of the collection should be,—with the exception of a single volume containing the *Drammaturgia* of Lessing, and some recent German studies upon Shakspeare,—entirely Italian.

Such a collection, undertaken and carried on with patient energy by a nucleus of minds bound together by a common faith and one sole literary synthesis, and not merely met together, as is the case in all the literary colleges or congresses of the present day, each to represent his own individuality and his own

* Fatality in Werner and Müllner; materialism in Calderon; individuality in Shakspeare, etc.

† It is not so in other countries. Coleridge translated Wallenstein; Schiller, Macbeth, and I know not what by Gozzi; and Shelley, had he lived long enough, would have translated Faust.

method or system, without any common direction, would both reveal and verify the existence of the double element, without the aid of which human intellect is unable to advance a single step upon the path of progress—past tradition, and individual inspiration, —and through it the ruling conception prescribed by the epoch to our new drama and new literature.

Nor can I suggest further than this. We are now disinherited of all true drama, through the self-same causes that have disinherited us of all true history; and, until those causes are removed, we must, I fear, rest content with the labours of criticism—more or less intellectual or fruitful—but of criticism alone.

[1861.]

The idea suggested in these last pages appeared to me at that time, and still appears to me, of great importance. And I continued to cherish the plan of realising it so long as I dared to hope that the insurrections we had prepared, and which burst forth in 1848, would have secured my country's liberty, and enabled me to leave the stormy arena of politics, and to consecrate the last years of my life to the dream of my youth—literature. My soul, withered by sorrows, delusions, and ingratitude, though dead to happiness, yet found consolation in the idea of the three works I yet hoped to complete; one to be called *Thoughts on Religion;* another, a *Popular History of Italy*, or, more correctly, of the Italian mission, intended for our working-men, in whom live the germs of the future

nation; and the collection to which I have here alluded.

Now even this last humble individual hope is gone. I feel that life is leaving me, and the little that yet remains I may not call my own, while Rome and Venice are enslaved, and our own guilty delay leaves the field open to foreign intrigue; while the fatal errors of the governing *Coterie*, and the local discontent they occasion, threaten to divert my countrymen from the true aim, and to endanger the unity of Italy.

And I therefore confide this idea to the unknown youth of Italy, to those who *ought not yet*, but soon, I hope, may be able to consecrate their time and labour to the revival of the true worship of art in our country.

The collection—according to my view—should be headed by a preliminary discourse, containing a general view of the drama, in which I should have endeavoured to point out what are its fundamental elements, and what the relation it bears to other branches of literature, and to the progressive, social, and religious synthesis of humanity.

This should be followed by a translation of *Sakoontala*, preceded by a sketch of the great epoch of Brahminical civilisation, which would initiate the reader into those oriental studies too much neglected amongst us during the last half century.

The translation of Æschylus should be accompanied by a discourse upon the Greek drama, a biographical sketch, and a notice of his *Prometheus*, a

marvellously prophetic symbol—unique among the writings of antiquity—of the struggle of humanity against usurped and tyrannical authority.

One or two of the writings of Sophocles—probably the Œdipus in Colonos and the Antigone—as well as the Iphigenia in Aulis of Euripides, with a few lines of biography, and a few pages showing the link existing between that period of the drama and the subsequent epoch, would complete all that is necessary with respect to the Greek drama.

The potent *collective* individuality of Rome was epic, not dramatic, in its life and character.

The collection should contain some pages briefly characterising that epoch, and, taking up the drama again with the mysteries of the middle ages, follow the progress of the religious drama down to the inevitable Catholic materialism of Calderon on the one hand; while it pointed out, on the other hand, how in Shakspeare the *Ego* reaches its highest formula, unaccompanied by any synthetical conception or love of the *collective*, but yet preparing the way for both by a sublime affirmation of individual power and individual right.

Then, entering the period of the modern drama, the study of Faust would display the problem of human life suggested, but not solved.

Goetz Von Berlichingen, one or two of the dramas of Alfieri, one of Werner, several others, both English, Polish, and French, as well as those of Manzoni, should be studied, not for their literary beauties or poetic

genius, but in the various elements of historical tradition, idealism, fancy, patriotism, humanity, and religion, through which they have attempted the solution of that problem. Attempted, not achieved; because each sought its solution in one of those elements only, while in the drama of the future they are destined to be harmonised and united.

Some volumes of the collection, especially the appendix to the dramas of Shakspeare, should contain translations of some of the criticisms of German writers. The collection should be completed by the works of Schiller, selections from a few other modern dramas and criticisms, and the conclusion would declare the prophetic signs of a new epoch.

And if the critical course of dramatic literature thus conceived—and which might, I think, have been completed in eighteen months by five or six young collaborators, translators especially—had shown that we possessed sufficient capacity for the enterprise, we might have attempted two other collections of far greater importance: one of the Epopees, the other of the great religious books.

By Epopees, I mean not those epic poems which are purely works of art, like the *Eneid*, the *Gerusalemme*, the *Lusiad*, *Paradise Lost*, the *Messiah*, and which have generally been the work of poets writing towards the decay of an epoch, and inspired by I know not what unconscious but generous desire to perpetuate, by a sublime sepulchral monument, the memory of a great idea expiring. I mean rather

those poems which I would fain denominate national Bibles, springing up—the cathedrals of art—from the *collective* genius of a people in the primary epochs of their existence, and containing, more or less clearly sketched forth, their traditions and the germs of their future and innate mission. Such are the *Râmâyana*, the *Mahâbhârata*—expressions of the two great Indian cycles; the Persian *Shahnameh*, the echo of the ancient Iranic traditions; the *Iliad*, the German *Niebelungen Lied*, the fragments of the Scandinavian *Edde*, the *Divina Commedia*—all of them of unknown authorship, with the exception of the work of Dante, whom the privilege of re-existence conceded to Italy has enabled to assume the position of a prophet standing between two epochs of national civilisation.

And by the books of religion I understand not those codes, more or less borrowed, more or less sectarian, of the secondary Polytheistic, Catholic, or Protestant Churches, but the great monumental works which are landmarks in the series of religious syntheses, the Bibles of the epochs, each of which is a page of the Bible of humanity, and the foundation of a vast period of progressive civilisation:—the *Vedas* of India, the *Naçkas* of Zoroaster, the Israelitish *Bible*, the *Gospel* of Jesus, the *Edda* of Snorro, and the *Koran*.

The first of the two collections—which might be much aided by the translations of Lassen, Max Müller, Gorresius, Rasenius, and others—would give us, if intermixed with philosophical discourses upon the primitive traditions, mythologico-historical legends,

and national songs of the various peoples, the basis and origin of the idea of nationality.

The second—if the various Bibles were linked together by discourses and studies, showing the progressive advance of the one beyond the other, and the heresies, sects, and derivations—analogous all of them—which issued from each, and broadly sketching the philosophies which arose between them to fulfil their mission of analysis of what had been, and preparation for what was to follow—would offer the most splendid demonstration possible of that law of progress which is the life of humanity, and might lay the first stone of the long-invoked and inevitable religion of the future.

Meanwhile, to return from these bright dreams to poor reality, I attempted when in exile, a few years after writing my articles on the historical drama, a slight sketch which might have formed part of the dramatic collection, to explain how I understood the description of discourse to be prefixed to the various dramas, and the method in which the psychological biography of the writers should be delineated. I selected as an example the shortest of the dramas of which I had spoken, *The Twenty-fourth of February* of Werner, based upon the element of Fatality. It was admirably translated by Agostino Ruffini, then in exile with me, and was published in Brussels by Hauman, preceded by a discourse written by me *Upon Fatality considered as an element of the Dramatic Art*, and followed by a brief Life of Werner.

But our names would have impeded the circulation of the little book in Italy, and it was therefore published without any name. Hence the circulation was very limited. The experiment failed. I now violate the order of date by introducing the article on Fatality here, because, combined with a few pages upon the *Angelo* of Victor Hugo, it forms the complement to what I have already inserted on the drama.

On Fatality, considered as an Element of the Dramatic Art—(1830).

On the 24th of February 1804, after three long years of suffering, during which she was assiduously watched by her son, the mother of Werner died. And five years later, his soul filled with the memory of that hour, he wrote the story of grief and malediction here translated, and gave it the title of *The Twenty-fourth of February.*

This work of mine, says Werner, *is a nocturnal poem; it is a song which echoes, so to speak, that death-rattle of the dying, which, however faint and stifled, yet vibrates in the inmost heart of the hearer.*

He had already said, at the commencement of the prologue, *This poem weighed upon my ill-governed spirit and darkened mind like a cloud, before I dared to give it utterance; and when at length I ventured to sing, my song issued forth interruptedly, lugubrious as the flapping of the wings of the owl.*

These words form the best comment upon the

poem, and absolve the writer from the censures uttered by intolerant and usurping critics upon those who depart one step from the limits hitherto traced out to art. I say usurping critics, because when an author writes under the influence of overwhelming passion—if that passion be not guilty—criticism has no right to do more than judge his power by the effects produced, and decide whether he has or has not succeeded in transfusing his own feelings and his own conception into the mind of the reader.

All inspiration that really springs from the heart is sacred and inviolable as the God who gave it. When the poet truly lays bare his very soul before you, like a victim, saying, *Behold, I am one who weeps*, and weeps indeed; weeps with you because perhaps to weep with others was denied to him; will you refer him to Aristotle? will you dare to answer him as Dante answered the damned? No; you will weep with him. In the presence of a deep grief powerfully expressed, or terror intensely felt, all criticism is mute. We are men before we are critics. God gave us tears before he gave us the power of analysis wherewith to decompose them and trace their cause.

The Twenty-fourth of February is an outburst of long-repressed passion; the convulsive feverish movement of a raging and tortured soul seeking refuge in the quiet of despair; the concentrated expression of one of those hours of moral nightmare in which the mind strives to vanquish the visions that torment it, by compelling them to assume an outward form and shape.

Werner knew what such hours are; the brief notice we intend to give of his life will prove this. He was a man of vast and restless powers of mind; his imagination was ardent even to delirium, his impressions strong, tenacious, at times even immovable. He loved his mother with such love as is felt by few sons, though by many mothers,—a persistent, religious love, identified with every feeling of his heart and life itself. He believed in a dominion exercised by occult influences and unseen powers over our existence; he had observed that certain days were always fatal to him; and it appears from one of his letters that on the 24th February of another year he had lost one very dear to him.

He felt God in the universe, but when he sought his image upon earth, he found but scepticism or necessity. On the one side, he saw deserted altars and extinct creeds, while Force incarnate in one man towered giant-like above the ruins; and on the other side, he saw the multitudes arising in the sacred name of God and of the religion of their fathers, but to bloody sacrifice and ferocious revenge.

He lived, indeed, in terrible and fatal times; and, notwithstanding the inward presentiment within him of a religion of love, his soul succumbed to their influence, and he either worshipped not, or worshipped in fear and trembling. The Spirit of God and the spirit of the world were at strife within him. His life was a long war. And *The Twenty-fourth of February* is an episode of that war, which he, not knowing to whom

to relate it, has related in his writings. God rules throughout the drama, but rules through terror. Like a warrior irritated by long resistance, his hand weighs heavily upon the vanquished.

The God of Werner is the *Deus ultionum*, who prostrates and whelms in crime those who arise against him in crime, and visits the sins of the parents upon their children. Man is alone, without defence or refuge, not even that of prayer. The curse of an unexpiated crime hangs over Kunz, ever ready to interpose between remorse and pardon—between him and heaven. Truda, his love, stands by his side, not as the interceding angel into which woman has been consecrated by Christianity, but as the living image and record of his crime, the fatal cause that drove him to commit it.

The unknown, destined to cut the knot, arrives unexpectedly, by unaccustomed ways, amid the darkness, as if guided by an invisible hand; and when his knock is heard at the door of the solitary house, you feel a shudder run through you. Fatality enters with him into that room where the two are together: his every word and movement are mysterious; a gleam of mournful joy lightens his countenance for an instant, but beneath that gladness is a remorse, a presage of woe. Beyond this trinity of wretchedness, no movement, no voice save of the night-birds, is heard. Without, the wind is howling of the vengeance of God. The scene is upon the Gemmi, one of the passes of the Alps,—immensity above, the abyss below, the desert

around. The action develops itself in harmony with the time and place; brief, concise, and fatal. Everything adds to the effect, and the sense of horror is increased unexpectedly by the smallest incidents, and continues to augment until the climax.

In this point of view, as the work of a great individuality, not of a school, *The Twenty-fourth of February* appears to me to stand alone, and almost unsurpassable. The attempt to revive the extinct dogma of fatality in modern drama has never, to my knowledge, found a more powerful interpreter than Werner; and were it not that the last words of the poem, and the condition of the personages, remind one that the author is a Christian, living in days near our own,* one would be tempted to believe it a fragment of Æschylus.

I have said as the work of a *great individuality*, not as the work of *a school*, because, although criticism may be silent before the revelation of the inward soul of the writer—the spontaneous, earnest inspiration of

* Madame De Staël, Remusat, and all the critics who have spoken of *The Twenty-fourth of February*, repeat the same accusation, and nearly in the same words, that by transporting fatality among the lower orders, and the destiny of the Atrides into the cabin of an Alpine shepherd, the sense of terror is rendered too oppressive, because introduced in times too near our own. Perhaps it is so; but had Werner imposed that mystery of fatality upon crowned heads, he would but have given us a copy of a Greek tragedy, and not a work of individual inspiration. His object was not to re-create Greek tragedy, but to transplant that religious terror which is the soul of that tragedy into the modern drama. The curse of the Atrides has lost all power over us men of the 19th century. The course of the ages, and tragic writers, have extinguished them for ever. But this accusation—which would have been deserved by one whose object had been to produce a work of art—is not applicable to Werner, whose idea and purpose were religious.

individual conscience—when not proposed as an example—it may not preserve that silence with regard to the works of imitators. As soon as it becomes a question of art, the critic has the right, nay the duty, of examination. Where—inspired solely by the hope of earning similar laurels—imitators crowd in, and coolly calculate by what artifice they may achieve the effect which was produced unconsciously by the first, criticism steps in to warn the young to admire, but not to imitate; to respect the suffering that inspired those verses or that drama, but not to elevate into a literary canon or theory of art that which is but an individual conception or idea, and is not, and cannot be, of the multitude. It is true that even torrents fertilize; but shall we, for that reason, endeavour to make of them our regular method of irrigation?

Because certain men of peculiar poetic temperament or tendencies have endeavoured to revive an extinct world, shall we—led to retrogression by the poetry of the attempt—waste amid ruins the powers given to us by God to enable us to lead the multitude in their advance?

The Twenty-fourth of February has given birth to, or rather has revived, a school. Müllner, Grillparzer, and others—Germans for the most part—have based their tragedies upon fatality. They have re-consecrated Destiny as king of the stage; and human liberty is immolated in their works to the irresistible force of a fate written in heaven, which watches over man, determines his every act, and drags him through crime and

remorse to perdition,—a doom fatally consummated at the striking of a clock or sound of a bell, at a fixed hour.

It is the duty of criticism to oppose such a school as this, not in the usual method of condemnation and contempt, but by investigating the idea which gave it birth, and its consequences.

The dramatic school of fatality, though fallen in the present day, or only represented by inferior imitators, is no isolated phenomenon or caprice of a few strangely-constituted minds; it is the poetic expression of another school, elevated to the rank of a philosophical formula by the author of the *Soirées de St. Petersbourg** and his followers. It is the reflex of an idea inborn in the human race, elevated into a dogma by the oriental world, and perpetuated in various forms and modifications throughout Europe. It ever reappears, more terrible and absolute in its dominion over the minds of men, at the destruction of any religious faith, and in those periods of moral crisis wherein doubt or arbitrary authority usurp the place of unity of belief. And the state of things at the present day is such—should it endure—as to threaten its revival amongst us.

For this reason some thoughts upon the genesis of this idea, considered as an element of the dramatic

* Fatality of condemnation, or sacrifice, is the cardinal point of the two schools. The curse passes from father to son, until cancelled by an expiation as terrible as the fault itself. . . . The first line of the dramatic action is written by a homicide, the last by the executioner. *The criminal is sent before his natural Judge.*

art, may not be without advantage, especially at the present day, when the tendency of every description of literature is to assume a dramatic colouring or form.

Every art is governed by a synthesis; every form of art by a law. Genius reveals to us from time to time one line of the law, marks one epoch of art, one development of the form. Art is one—one the conception or ruling thought it pursues and will attain; but it passes in its pilgrimage through an ascending series of formulæ, constituting the various schools recorded by history. Each of these formulæ comprehends, plus its own term, all the terms revealed by the preceding. Each one marks a new and higher development of the thought which art is called upon to express. From the whole progressive series of formulæ is evolved, in the fulness of time, the entire synthesis. Then is the initiation complete, the path marked out. On this path art advances, strong, sure, and joyful in an aim of which it cannot henceforth by any possibility be deprived; secure from abrupt transition or long uncertainty, and free alike from the servitude that enchains and the license that misleads.

I shall perhaps elsewhere explain and apply more in detail than my present limits allow, this law of art —a law of continued progress,—which governs literature, as all other things. Here I merely indicate it, in order to deduce from it that which belongs to my present purpose—the fact, that the intolerant exclusive criticism of a period or of a school is valueless

to art: it neither interprets, nor promotes it. The attempt to confine mind in the absolute and unlimited worship of the fundamental term of one epoch of literature, might possibly succeed in constituting a school, but never a religion of literature. On the other hand, to attempt, when an epoch of literature is once exhausted, to cancel and entomb with it for ever the term which gave it life, is to misconceive the law of art, and to withdraw one gem from the diadem which will one day crown the brow of humanity. If criticism can be of any real utility, it is by keeping faithful record of all the formulæ successively adopted by art, thence to deduce the formula to come; and whenever, in studying past epochs and examining the different formulæ consecutively developed by literature, one single term, one single ruling idea, one parent thought—however variously applied—is found invariably to recur in them all,—that idea is a part of the law,—that term is a term of the synthesis, and cannot be eliminated from the art of the future. It is the office of criticism to indicate, and of great men to exemplify, its use and its application.

The criticism of our epoch hesitates, as it has ever done, between the crowd of imitators who, mistaking one line of the law for the law entire, decree, in the name of genius past, the inertia of the living, present, and to come,—and the smaller number of minds, who, intolerant of all restraint, unwilling to be slaves and incapable of freedom, deny, in their abhorrence of the tyranny attempted in its name, even that one line of

the truth, and plunge into anarchy. And both are alike in error. For when time has completed the destruction of an epoch, none can bid it *live and flourish;* and when one rule of art has become insufficient for the wants of mankind, and an obstruction to the human mind, incapable of applying or guiding its aspirations, it is a sign that another is about to be revealed. A great genius then arises and gives it utterance.

But anterior revelations are not therefore cancelled. Epochs pass away, forms decay. Art but assumed them for a period, and destroys them when that period is completed; but the spirit lives, emancipates itself from their ruins, and rises on high, effulgent with pure light, a new star in the soul's heaven. The idea which germinates in each epoch is everlasting, a truth irrevocably conquered by human intellect. Paganism is extinct; the Greek form broken up into fragments; but the art of Homer, the art which individualises life, and isolates it in the exquisitely wrought symbol, died not with the Grecian world; and from one of the fragments arose the *Eneid,* and from another, after a lapse of fifteen centuries, the poetry of Torquato.

If in the study of dramatic literature we take these principles for our guide, we find that the drama, like the history of the European world of which it is the reflex, has, from the period of its commencement to our own day, passed through three great formulæ, and constituted three systems, or three schools; to which three formulæ correspond three great spirits, three rulers in art; and these three formulæ, with the three great men

who are their representatives, reveal, in methods fundamentally distinct, one single tendency, and one single idea, Fatality.

These three great spirits are Æschylus, Shakspeare, and Schiller, three poetic worlds; they and they alone reflecting in their works the idea of a whole period of civilisation, they and they alone dramatically expressing an entire epoch. In Æschylus is embodied the soul of Greek poetry; in Shakspeare that of the poetry of the middle ages. They are two extinct worlds; two epochs irrevocably consumed and passed away. The third epoch, now in its dawn, has been foreseen and initiated among dramatists by Schiller alone. Nor do I remember any others who have thus constituted themselves either the prophets or historians of their epoch in their dramas, or revealed the ruling idea of an epoch with so much power as to offer us any certain rule by which to govern our investigation of the eternal elements of the drama.*

Æschylus is great,† great with all the solemn and

* Alfieri, born ten years before Schiller, foresaw new destinies for art, but did not comprehend the fundamental characteristics of the future epoch. He neither saw the goal itself, nor the means of reaching it. He saw that art was declining, and attempted to revive it by engrafting the *idea* of the middle ages upon the Greek *form*, and expended the power and energy of a giant in the attempt. He was great, but not as a dramatist; he cleared the way for the social art to come, but did not initiate it. The fundamental characteristic of the literary epoch foreseen by Schiller, is the translation of the conscience of the human race into individual action. The art of the future must be essentially national and European at the same time, and whatever may be thought of the drama of Alfieri, it is, in fact, purely and exclusively national.

† The comparison often instituted by critics between the three Greek

gloomy grandeur that surrounds the cradle of a people. His are not dramas, but mysteries or myths. The atmosphere by which his creations are surrounded is the atmosphere of a temple. His terrors and his hopes are the hopes and terrors of religion. His style is at times oracular. Placed between the Oriental and Greek worlds, between Asia and rising Europe, one might fancy that he foresaw the coming clash between the two principles represented by these two worlds, and all the vicissitudes of the terrible struggle that has lasted for more than twenty centuries between

tragic writers is just if regarded from an æsthetic point of view, but not so from the point of view of the conception or idea. Sophocles and Euripides are followers; Æschylus is the Father of the art. The external representation of the idea is more masterly in them, the form is more graceful and delicate. They arose at a later period, when Greek civilisation was greatly refined, and the already improved position of women caused them to exercise a greater influence upon society.

But in Æschylus the *idea* itself, frequently presented in all its primitive nudity, shines athwart the darkness of the period, prophetic and terrible as the Deity in the burning bush. His form is rugged, but always Titanic, vast, and monumental.

Sophocles is the poet of affection and fraternal love. Maternal love also has found in him an interpreter unequalled in Greek literature, and if we would seek his rival, we must turn to Virgil.

But Æschylus, in all those gifts which belong to genius in a semi-barbarous era—invention, power, rapidity, simplicity, and deep and earnest religious feeling, is unapproachable. Sophocles painted, Æschylus sculptured his forms of art. The strokes are few, but they give us the skeleton of a world.

Sophocles is the artist-poet, but Æschylus is the high-priest of art, the parent art, the sacred art inspired by God himself in all the majesty of those first revelations which initiate the entire series of its subsequent manifestations.

I do not speak of Euripides, because, whatever the beauties of his works, there are in them affectations and adulterations of art which already indicate its decay.

them, and that he mourned with the dignified sorrow of one who weeps over a noble cause, over the sacrifices in store for his country, destined to be the initiatrix of that struggle, and the long years of slavery during which her name would be cancelled from the list of nations, and the sufferings which her resurrection would entail upon her. Certain it is that Æschylus has all the sadness of great previsions.

In reading Æschylus the mind is clouded by an undefined melancholy. Even when he sounds a hymn of victory over the barbarians, you yet feel within you a sense of that hidden and mysterious sadness which ever reveals itself—to minds capable of understanding it—in the smallest words of great and prophetic souls.

The struggle between free-will and fatality, or, in other words, between man and the universe that enchains him, was the programme of Europe and of Greece, destined to nurture the germ within her. The victory of the first was decreed and infallible; but in the days of Æschylus the contest was yet in the condition of a problem to be solved. Greek intellect was destined to take the first steps towards its solution, but at a later period and through its philosophy. The true life of the Greek world is not in its poetry.* The poetry of Greece was mythological

* The true life, spontaneity, and mission of Greece were in its philosophy; and a clear perception of this distinction between the two periods—the poetic and philosophic—through which Greek intellect passed in its development, is indispensable to those who desire to under-

and religious, and the sources of Greek mythology are all oriental: all the religious formulæ of young Greece are of eastern derivation, and when that original source was exhausted, its poetry was at an end. The poetic period of Greece did, as I have said, but state the problem. Hence the predominance of the narrative character, in which the conscience of the poet himself is rarely seen; and hence its sphere of imagination is entirely objective. A sense of quiet and repose pervades all its poetic creations, of which it is difficult to decide whether it springs from security of victory, or resignation.

The rebellion against oriental influence was every day becoming more powerful in the habits of social life; but Asia yet weighed upon Europe, with all the superior power of religion over civil institutions. Individuals had the impulse, but not the consciousness of liberty. They still bowed down before the forces of nature, which were held sacred and superior to all analysis. Intellect, yearning to advance, was still hemmed in on every side by mystery, which spread its veil over the universe.

It was perhaps because Æschylus endeavoured to tear asunder that veil that we are told he with difficulty escaped with his life from sacerdotal fury. In this period Liberty wandered restlessly around the basis of the pyramid, but Fatality sat enthroned in

stand these times and to define their character. The first period is one (speaking generally) of *derived* civilisation; Greek originality is manifested only in the second period.

immoveable tyranny at the summit; and Æschylus was the interpreter of the period, and rendered its fatality in the drama which he created.

Fatality weighs over the personages of Æschylus, as judgment weighs over the condemned. Occasionally—as in the *Eumenides*—it absolves, but more often, it condemns; but whether it condemn or absolve, it is pre-ordained and insuperable ever. It acts without aim or purpose, as if merely for the exercise of its power—no more. It is not the instrument of any universal decree, to be fulfilled at the expense of individuals; or of a law compelling man to become the executor of any vast plan designed by the intelligent cause of the universe, and only to be wrought out by humanity. The Greek of that day had no knowledge or conception of humanity, and therefore no knowledge or conception of the continuity, progressive advance, and aim of the race, to be achieved through individual sacrifice. The work of fatality was fulfilled, and concluded with the individual; and its action was direct, unsoftened by the intermediate action of any moral agency, or the development of any secondary cause calculated to render the individual unconscious of the sentence hanging over him, and leaving him at least an illusion of liberty. It is an unequal struggle at the foot of a scaffold—brief, but tremendous in the agony of the victim and the atrocious impassibility of the sacrificer—between man and destiny.

The world has vanished from before them; it gradually melts out of sight in Greek tragedy as the

catastrophe approaches. Fatality, like the falcon hovering over its prey, descends from above upon the Protagonist of the drama, in the midst of this desert, in ever-lessening circles, which mark the limits of the action, and bring the drama to its close.

Hence the simplicity of conception, the rapidity of culmination, the absence of all progressive action in its personages; hence the unities and all the—I will neither say beauties nor defects, but characteristics of the Greek drama.

All criticism of that drama must therefore be based upon a comparison of the merit of the individual with the amount of his suffering; the effect must be judged by the moral energy he displays, the dignity of the tragedy by the noble resignation and majesty with which he succumbs, and the amount of moral efficacy, by the elevation of mind produced by the spectacle of overwhelming misfortune manfully endured.

And all these qualities of tragic effect, dignity, solemnity of misfortune, and terror, are to be found in Æschylus; the whole struggle and the overthrow, the condemner and condemned, all are of gigantic and superhuman mould.

One might fancy that his heroes were of Titanic race, and only to be overcome by unyielding, omnipotent, and inexorable fatality. But when he felt the soul of the Greek world, liberty, thrill within him; when he remembered having fought at Salamis against the East, and shed his blood in the cause of the active European principle, against the inertia and servitude

imposed by Asia; he protested against, and denied the empire of that fatality which, from the height of its mysteries and its theogony, yet dominated his country.

And it was in such a moment that, prophet-like, he composed his *Prometheus*. The *Prometheus* is the highest formula of Greece, in her first period, with which I am acquainted. Fatality reigns there, more gigantic and terrible than elsewhere; its dominion is written in characters of blood, but a glance is cast upon the future that foresees the distant victory. One feels that the long agony of the Titan will not be useless to future generations. The thing called martyrdom has arisen, and sooner or later will achieve human emancipation. The state of things is changed. The former impassibility of fate is converted into ferocity, the sentence executed upon the Thinker has all the character of a revenge, and that solemn calm—the sign of secure and uncontested power—which once marked the execution of the decrees of fate has been transferred from the Ruler to the victim. Force and violence may chain Prometheus to the rock, but they cannot tear from him the secret hidden in his breast. His silence is the first triumph of spirit over matter—the victory of moral power and free reason over arbitrary and irresponsible authority.

And while, in the other dramas of antiquity, the spectator succumbed with the Protagonist, crushed by destiny; in the *Prometheus*, he rebels with him, and a cry bursts forth from the soul that comprehends his

silence—*I will sit with thee upon thy rock, and share thy suffering and thy sacrifice, for thy hopes are immortal, and posterity will reclaim the gauntlet of defiance which we consecrated victims have cast down.*

And posterity did redeem that gage. Greek philosophy achieved what Greek poetry had been unable to accomplish.* The presentiments of Æschylus were verified by Epicurus, when, little less than three centuries before Christ, he summed up the work of emancipation performed by the Greek schools of philosophy by declaring that *thought has no law of necessity.*

The East was overcome. Moral liberty was achieved. Mind was withdrawn from the dominion of the forces of nature, and liberty and movement substituted to the inertia of authority. The gods still reigned in heaven, but man on earth. No intermediate or connecting link was left; the human intellect had cut the knot at a single blow. There was divorce between earth and heaven. Fatality was overthrown. The reign of the individual began, but the reign of chance at the same time.

But it was the dominion of reaction, and mere reaction cannot long endure. The idea of chance denied every religious idea; all law, order, science, philosophic method, experience, prevision, and—if carried out to

* Æschylus wrote a *Prometheus Unbound*, but it was lost, and the few fragments that remain do not suffice to show the conception. It seems as if fate interfered to prevent Greek poetry from transmitting to us the expression of a precocious idea, destined to be nurtured by philosophy alone.

its ultimate consequence — all connection between cause and effect.

But philosophy cannot be nourished by negations; and Greece, having accomplished its mission, perished. Greece extinct, and the Greek idea having been practically realised and engrafted upon half of Europe by Rome,* the human mind experienced an overpowering need of heaven. Polytheism, in its last days, as if in revenge for their former tyranny, had dragged the deities down to earth. The terrible unity was dismembered into fractions. A thousand symbols were still worshipped, but no God remained. The human intellect, terrified at the solitude, strove to relink earth with heaven. It turned once more to the religious idea, and to the belief in a Supreme Power having a direct action upon human affairs.

But the *Ego* still reigned, proud of the triumphs it had achieved and the liberty it had won; and though conscious that the problem of the *individual* had not yet been solved in all its aspects, it refused to descend from the throne it had built up for itself.

The cause of moral liberty was won. Not so that of moral equality.

* Rome did not, and could not, possess a drama. Rome had no original spontaneous idea of her own. She revealed no term of the synthesis of the universe. She evolved and developed the Greek term, and perfected, applied, diffused, and exhausted the conception which had been the programme of Greece. Therefore, although Rome had a national policy and institutions of her own, she had no national religion, philosophy, literature, or drama. Seneca's imitations are not worthy the name. The dramatic works of Ennius, also, are but imitations of the Greek.

The second period of the great human epoch began. The *Ego* remained centre of the sphere appointed for the diffusion of its activity. It accepted the unity of heaven, but sought not to found unity on earth.

Man and God were the two terms of the new synthesis—the synthesis of the middle ages.*

The drama revived, and with the drama fatality reappeared, but in a milder and less despotic form, and bearing the name of Necessity. How it happened that amid such an abundance of dramatic elements, the drama of the middle ages arose so late, is a question of no great moment.

How the idea of necessity—the inevitable result of that principle of individuality which was the soul of the middle ages—arose; how the individual, finding himself standing alone and unaided in the presence of the Infinite, was doomed to fall by insensible degrees into discouragement, and despair of ever

* The middle ages had no consciousness or conception of humanity. The individual was the end and aim of the period, the *Ego*, sovereign lord over its customs, laws, politics, and the vicissitudes of peace and war. The religious idea, although very powerful, did not carry man beyond the term of the individual, and only contemplated the perfectibility of the individual. The attempt to realise the *Social* idea failed, from being premature. It only left behind a sublime presentiment, to be verified in the future. And that presentiment, as indeed all the grand previsions of the epoch now in its dawn, was garnered up by a man whose soul—hitherto misunderstood—was the sanctuary of the future. Dante was the first of the series of geniuses who may be regarded as the prophets of our epoch, and from the well of Dante we shall one day draw both the poetry and the conception of the social religious drama which our epoch is destined to create.

reaching the promised goal of perfection; how the idea of necessity glided in, as if to mask that discouragement, and, to a certain extent, excuse the impotence of the individual, it would require too much space to trace here; nor is it necessary for our present purpose.

But necessity reappears in the drama of the period as an element of action, identified with the epoch, and inseparable from the inward life and idea of the times. You would say that it came forth without the intent or consciousness of the writer, from the very nature of dramatic exposition.

The dramas of Shakspeare summed up and expressed this period more completely perhaps than could have been done by the greatest historian. He wrote in the 16th century, and he seems to have arrested the expiring soul of the middle ages in its flight, in order to transfuse it into his personages. His drama is the drama of *individuality*.

The individual is everything to him, and in the art of perfectly depicting a character with a few master-strokes, Dante, Tacitus, and Michael Angelo are his only rivals. He does not laboriously copy, he casts the whole in a single mould; he does not evoke, he creates. Shakspeare's personages live and move as if they had just come forth from the hand of God, with a life that, though manifold, is one, and though complex, is harmonious. They are not symbols of any absolute or ideal type; they do not profane God's work by representing his creatures in fragments.

The human being is not defined by its most prominent faculty, nor life by its most potent manifestation. The beings themselves—life itself—are brought before us on the scene, and that with a reality, truth, and perfection, the highest ever attained by man. No tint or shadow is forgotten—and to those who read with penetration, the secret of a whole life, and the true interpretation of a character, will transpire from the most trifling revelation, from a gesture or a word unnoticed by the many. The *Ego* reigns in the dramas of Shakspeare in all the modifications, mysteries, and apparent irregularities of which conscience is susceptible. But it does not reign alone. In his plays, as in the middle ages, an unseen power governs the actions of the individual, follows ever on his track, and impels him along the paths himself has chosen to the catastrophe that choice determines. It is no universal law acting upon collective humanity; no social religious idea. Shakspeare shows neither the consciousness of a law nor of humanity: the future is mute in his dramas, and enthusiasm for great principles unknown. His genius comprehends and sums up the past and the present, it does not initiate the future. He interpreted an epoch; he announced none. Necessity, which was the soul of the period, stalks invisibly throughout his dramas, magically introduced,—whether by art or instinct I know not; —I know that its reflex is seen alike on the brow of Othello and of Macbeth; it colours the scepticism of Hamlet and the light irony of Mercutio; it sur-

rounds with a halo of previsioned woe the figures of his women, divine creations, sacred to love, innocence, and resignation; and it inspires the generality of his personages with those reflections on the nullity of human things and the worthlessness of life which so constantly recur throughout his plays, and leave a bitter sense of delusion on the youthful soul that approaches the works of genius as a sanctuary wherein to seek inspiration and counsel for maturer years.

Shakspeare's personages, like those of Æschylus, are doomed. Necessity watches over them unseen, poisoning their every thought, hope, and joy with an undefined, inexplicable sense of discouragement, like the remorse of an unforgiven crime. But in Æschylus the individual is thus doomed from birth; the decree of fatality goes forth while he yet sleeps in his mother's arms; the curse on the father extends to the children; and the only liberty vouchsafed to man is that of dying more or less nobly.

In Shakspeare—and this is a real progress—liberty does exist. The act of a single day, or it may be of an hour, has thrown an entire life under the dominion of necessity; but in that day or hour the man was free, and arbiter of his own future.

In Æschylus, as I have already said, fate towers in the very path of the individual; its action upon him is direct; there are no intermediate agents; fate and its victim are alone,—around them is the desert.

Not so in Shakspeare. Necessity reigns over all, but invisible. Its action is indirect, and through the medium of an intermediate agency—man or idea—acting upon the individual, sometimes from without, sometimes from within. The passions are the instruments of this necessity: one first step or action wrung from a man by the impulse or calculation of a passion, determines all the succeeding steps, and he succumbs in virtue of a psychological law, the law inscribed by Hobbes at a later period upon the title-page of his philosophy. *The dagger of the mind*, as Shakspeare says in Macbeth, gleams before him through the darkness, and draws him along. The divine power has scarcely ever any direct intervention in the Shakspearean drama. The fantastic element, so frequently introduced, if closely examined, will be found never to depart from the individual sphere. His supernatural apparitions are all of them either simply personifications of popular superstitions, or, like Caliban and Ariel, symbols of the duality of humanity, or, like the witches in Macbeth, the incarnations of human passion.

But in Æschylus, Force, Mercury, the Eumenides, are the direct and immediate representation of that fatality which constrains or torments through their means.

These distinctions are important, because they characterise two great historic periods, and at the same time reveal the secret of the different dramatic forms adopted by these two great men. As the

essential characteristics of the drama of Æschylus are derived from the system of representing the idea, so from the system of representing the *agents* of the idea—the system of Shakspeare—are derived the thousand requirements of that drama which our critics have agreed to call *Romantic.*

I write rapidly, and do but faintly indicate my meaning. Necessity and fatality are two worlds, and a complete examination of these two formulæ of the relation between earth and heaven, as expressed by Æschylus and Shakspeare, would require much fuller development. But since this is impossible in these pages, suffice it for the present to note, that fatality and necessity, differing in many respects, are alike in this,—that neither contemplates nor foresees *Humanity;* but addressing themselves to the *individual* alone, lead inevitably to the conclusion of the inutility—in so far as the influence of the special fact on the general destiny is concerned—of sacrifice; and thence the inutility of life itself, which, if it be not sacrifice, is null, or worse than null.

In the doctrine deducible from the dramas of Shakspeare the creature is responsible to God—if for no better reason—because a moment of liberty was once granted to him; but granted before God alone, and not before the fellow-creatures amongst whom God has placed him. Expiation is of no value to others, but only to the individual, and hence it can never rise to the dignity of sacrifice. Life and death consume themselves in a circle, which all

generations and individuals wearily tread in turn, to pass away as phantoms, each alike unable to leave behind him a dying word of comfort or counsel to another, and say unto him: *Elevate yourself one degree nearer to the God of the living and the dead; be my tomb thy stepping-stone on* the ascent towards Him. The tomb that encloses nations and individuals is mute for ever. The tradition of the human race,—which alone can give value to individual action and alone connect earth with heaven, without annihilating the power or cancelling the liberty of man,—is unlinked from sepulchre to sepulchre. No common aim, no common progress; solitude in life, solitude in death.

Shakspeare felt the void around the solitary soul; he felt the worthlessness of human life when not united with other lives by faith in a common progress; and he revealed it in many passages similar to that in which he bitterly says,—

> "*Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,*
> *That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,*
> *And then is heard no more; it is a tale,*
> *Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury—*
> *Signifying nothing.*" . . . . .

But man was not sent here to enact the part of an idiot, burthensome to himself, and useless to others; and if life be but a shadow, when sanctified by sacrifice it is the shadow of God.

With Shakspeare the drama expired. I speak of the drama in its highest form, that *organic* drama which lays the foundations of an entire school,

reflects the lineaments of a whole epoch, and displays upon the scene the ruling characteristics and generative element of a whole period of civilisation.

Such a drâma as this can only co-exist with a religious idea, and after Shakspeare the religious idea continued to languish, until it disappeared.

The *Ego* rebelled against necessity, as it had formerly rebelled against fate, and recommenced with regard to moral equality, the work accomplished by Greek genius with regard to liberty. And no sooner did it discover the possibility of achieving that work by its own efforts, than it conceived the idea of unlimited and unregulated emancipation, and proclaimed a formula of negation as daring as that of Epicurus, and declared the rights of the individual to be the sole law of human existence.

The formula of rights was the second answer offered by Man to the devouring Sphinx, the ever-renewed mystery of the universe.

The first was a mere formula of independence: the second suggested victory. The first was a divorce between earth and heaven: by the second, Man ventured alone to attempt to penetrate the secret of heaven, and discover the intent for which God had created him, solely through his own individual faculties.

And he prevailed as far as in him lay. He destroyed the empire of necessity, and, between the 16th and 18th centuries, achieved the recognition of moral equality, and the perfect conception of individuality.

There he stopped short. Divinity lay beyond, that Infinite to which the soul aspires, the universe which is its distant image, and the social idea which is the spirit of the universe.

Intellect wandered restlessly and furiously around these boundaries, but was unable to pass beyond them. The formula of rights, which had been accepted as the sole law, cancelled the idea of duty. The idea of duty is as inseparable from the social idea as the social idea is inseparable from, and necessary to the comprehension of the universe.

God, Duty, the Social idea, are three terms necessarily connected; three ideas, of which, if one be absent, the others are obscured.

And so they remained.

Every effort was fruitless; every attempt failed. Philosophy called up all its powers of audacity, and cried aloud with Fichte, *The* EGO *is equal to God.* In vain. The universe answered the cry of impotent defiance with ironic laughter, and remained immovable, inviolate, and immutable between the two terms of the formula. The *Ego* had placed itself face to face with Deity, but had not identified itself with him. It was found impossible to reduce the conception to reality, and scepticism returned; scepticism, discouragement, and inertia.

The human intellect at the present day, placed between desires greater than the possibility of attainment, and the idea of a mission vaster than the power of accomplishment, is restless, anxious, and

depressed. Man either fixes a prayerful glance upon a future beyond his reach, or utters a cry of grief and rage like a chained lion. And the winds scatter alike both rage and prayer.

And the drama, which progresses with the history of the human mind, having vainly sought improvement in every form; having been converted into a sort of mosaic of ancient and modern forms upon the French stage;* having dwindled down into mere imitation of every school, every people, and every method—servilely obeying some preconceived and despotic rules, and never venturing beyond the confines of the individual school of philosophy,—is now silent, awaiting a genius capable of reviving it.

. . . . . .

At the present day, then, we have no longer a drama because we have no longer a heaven. Fatality is extinct. Necessity is extinct. The Theogonic drama expired with Æschylus, and the drama of individuality was exhausted by Shakspeare. The

* *Athalie*, *The Cid*, and others, are beautiful works, but do not constitute an original dramatic school or system. Generally speaking, the French drama is imitative; usually it is an imitation of the antique, and if—rarely indeed—the conception be original, it is crushed by the form, always two thousand years old. The criticisms of August Schlegel (*Lessons on Dramatic Literature*), although severe in tone, are, I think, almost always just and well founded. The reader should get them and judge for himself. Not so the fanatical admiration professed by his brother Frederick for Calderon and the Spanish stage. The inspiration of the Spanish theatre is national, and Calderon is a powerful writer; but they do not reproduce the life either of a people, an epoch, or a principle entire. However, in Spain as in Italy, the drama has been crushed by far other influence than that of French schools or academic traditions.

link between the finite and the infinite is broken. The mind of the dramatist wanders hesitating in the void, without any centre of direction, without any supreme unitarian conception to give measure and value to the human actions he represents. Hence the absence of all dramatic purpose, interest, or criterion. And so long as this uncertainty shall endure, it were madness to hope for any revival of the drama.

Will it long endure? It is well to hope not.

It is time to re-ascend to heaven. The old generation may be doomed to pass away amid this moral anarchy, but the new already aspires towards a faith, and will not expire without having realised its aspiration. . .

It is time to re-ascend to heaven: not—as in the epoch of fatality—to abolish all human liberty at the foot of infinite power; nor—as in the period of necessity—to render that liberty barren and useless by confining it within the narrow circle of individual effort, without aim or efficacy beyond.

It is impossible henceforth to found a drama upon either of the two systems. The first may create a dramatic situation, but not a complete dramatic subject; the second deprives art of every noble mission or aim, and condemns it to materialism. The first effaces the human being, the second distorts his nature by effacing his social mission, upon which alone his superiority to the other animals depends. The first destroys all idea of good and

evil, merit and demerit. The second elevates good and evil into a permanent duality of alternate victory and defeat. Both, by rejecting the tradition of the human race, and the authority of experience, accept one only of the two terms of the universal synthesis evolved by succeeding epochs, and violate the eternal law of Art of which we spoke at the commencement of our article.

It is time to re-link earth with heaven; to re-unite the finite being with the Infinite Idea, to give human liberty the divine consecration, and—if I may be allowed the expression—confer upon the creature the citizenship of the universe hitherto denied him; in other words, to harmonise in one religious formula the two terms of the synthesis which have remained opposed or disunited until now.

An intellectual epoch is now dawning upon us which will comprehend the two; and by accepting them as its point of departure, advance one step farther in that knowledge of God which is the ultimate term of every human synthesis.

Upon the ruins of the two worlds of which we have spoken the human intellect will raise up a third, destined to solve the enigma of Prometheus and put an end to the grand struggle.

A few elect foresaw this half a century ago, and the greatest minds at the present day derive inspiration, as the unhappy find consolation, and those yearning after love and religion derive faith, from their announcement of their presentiment. The

angel of sacrifice will bless their silent and neglected sorrow, and smile upon the generations as he kindles a star of immortal hope over their early tomb.

Perhaps the inutility of every effort hitherto has arisen from the attempt to deny or overcome, without comprehending it, a power which reappears in every period, and from which man never yet sought to escape without falling into scepticism or nullity. The persistence in a struggle between the individual and the forces of the universe—when it may be that the sole liberty of the individual consists in acquiring the power of harmonising his existence with them—is madness.

The attempt to harmonise the two principles of liberty and necessity—which, after passing through a series of transformations into secondary and gradually simpler formulæ, are represented at the present day by the individual principle and social principle—is the sole method that will lead us to the peaceful discovery of our law of being, and the organised development of our destiny.

Liberty lives for ever in the individual, nor may it be immolated without extinguishing all morality of action, all responsibility in the agent.

But liberty is not anarchy. A divine conception is the soul of the universe. It is eternal and supreme over all individuals; and liberty, morality, and responsibility would be but words empty of all meaning if there were no law to govern their exercise, and form a basis and criterion by which to judge their action.

There is therefore a law, an aim, a mission, a duty. The problem is to harmonise these with liberty. Epicurus and Hobbes were both wrong, and guilty of falsifying and mutilating human nature.

A third system will be raised, superior to both,—a third formula comprehending the two preceding, and harmonising and uniting them.

The method by which the human intellect elevated itself through these first doubts to the conception of humanity, and from it to the idea of a continuous progress of which humanity is the interpreter, is now well understood, and it is not necessary to relate it here. Ten years of historic studies founded upon that basis, and the labours of various philosophic schools, and of men who have sought the verification of that conception in almost every branch of the encyclopædic tree; the assent—as if by inspiration—of the young generation; and, moreover, the proved impotence of every remedy for our actual state of moral uneasiness and intellectual sterility attempted upon any other basis, have converted those doubts into a certainty. The world has now arrived at a consciousness—however obscure and inexact—of the new formula which is being elaborated by the century; and this is sufficient to show that our new literature should be informed by the same spirit and tendency. The world has arrived at the consciousness of a law of progress governing all human things, and this is sufficient to show that the drama must reflect that law.

A third idea, the idea of Providence, now triumphs over the ideas of fate and necessity, and this is sufficient to prove that those who seek to revive the dramatic art, must direct their efforts and govern their conceptions by that idea.

The drama of Providence, a drama that shall reflect the conscience of the human race; that, preserving the representation of the individual prominent and intact, shall yet find a means of connecting him with the general design of which he is a free agent; that looks for and teaches truth through the medium of historic *reality*, and the principle through the fact; that displays through the special subject chosen the general law of the epoch, above that the law of humanity, and supreme over all the Deity—Initiator of the epochs, and Father of humanity; a drama that shall substitute for the fatality that crushes and overwhelms the mission that elevates and ennobles, and for the expiation that cancels error the sacrifice that merits praise; such a social drama, eminently religious and educational, as much vaster than the drama of Shakspeare, in proportion and purpose, as the idea of humanity is grander than the individual idea,—will arise in the epoch we foresee, and should even now be set before youthful genius as the ultimate goal.

And may the image of Schiller, who was the precursor of this new drama, be suspended above the desk of the writer to inspire his studies; and may he devoutly read and re-read his works, which will

only be the more honoured in proportion as the age becomes worthy to appreciate that noble soul. May he be regarded not as a model for servile imitation—for we may not be servile even before genius itself—but as an encouragement to dare, a comfort, an example of how a man strong in soul, and filled with the love of God and humanity, may become the glory of his native land, and elevate the souls of his brother men to the sublimest heaven of poetry.

For Schiller possessed both sanctity of soul and faith in God and in the destiny of humanity, even when he beheld it degraded. His genius was the gift of God, and it led him to that height upon which as yet he stands alone, by revealing to him the heaven of Providence. Schiller is the poet of Providence and of Hope. His heaven is vast, serene, and lovely as the Italian sky; and even when clouded by sorrow and misfortune, one star remains shining above the tempest and triumphing over both; for in the dramas of Schiller the first purifies and the second elevates man.

If Æschylus teaches us greatly to resist and nobly to succumb, and Shakspeare calmly to face and to despise both life and death, Schiller inspires us to noble action and to sacrifice. The whole religion of sacrifice is contained in his works. The great social idea, which is the secret of our epoch, is the life and soul of his dramas. The poetry of the future, the educator of the human race, is foreseen and adored by him. No sooner had he—in his *Robbers*, and *Kabal and Liebe*—paid his tribute to the epoch in

which he lived, than he advanced a step beyond it, entered another world, and consecrated himself the poet of the new Faith, and priest of that Art which shall one day unloosen the bonds of Prometheus, and crown him with the immortal wreath reserved by Providence for the martyrs of Thought—flowers that may not be gathered by the individual, but by humanity alone. With his presentiment and love of humanity—a love as yet but little understood, but destined to sanctify all other affections, by raising them to the height of the lost religious idea,—he has foreseen the union and accord between the individual and the social idea, between liberty and the law of the universe.

In Schiller, man is presented to us free, and possessed of a fulness and power of faith of which neither the ancients nor Shakspeare had any conception. The guiding star of his destiny burns, as he tells us, in his own breast; and you feel, at the same time, that even should he be false to that destiny, and forsake the guidance of that star, he cannot extinguish its ray within him. You feel, should he consecrate his life as a mission to the development of a holy thought, that though he may succumb in the struggle, his death will be but the death of the body, the destruction of the form; and that his soul will live for ever in that great idea. You feel, should he prove unworthy, and grovel in the dust of individual passion and egotism, rebellious to that social idea and to the law of the universe, that though he may expire, the

idea is immortal, and that Providence, watching over its fulfilment from on high, will cause even his action against it and the brief triumph of the power he abused, to bring forth some element of social progress, and aid in the development of the design of God in the creation.

This sense of a Providence, which informs the master-works of Schiller, is the secret of the influence he exerts, and long will exert, over the minds of his readers. His work inspires a calmness, not of inertia or mere resignation, but of a faith superior to every trial; a religious sentiment that purifies and exalts the spirit by recalling its origin, and colouring it with poetry and enthusiasm; an adoration, not contemplative and Oriental, but active and European—the adoration of love nobly felt—the worship of generous exertion, and not of empty prayer.

He both retempers and animates the soul. Life is strengthened and purified by his works. One might imagine them perfumed with a breath from the promised land, and fancy one heard a distant song of angels hovering over the creatures consecrated by him to grief and misfortune, like the celestial harps that gladdened the ears of the early martyrs of Christianity. . . . . .

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What I have already said may at least suffice to attract the attention of our critics, and what is more, of my young countrymen, to the religious element which must be made the foundation of the future

drama, and to guard them against the attempt to revive the extinct dogma of Greek fatality upon the stage. Beliefs once lost can neither be revived themselves nor revive others. Our life is with the future, not with the past.

I am aware that the previsions here enunciated with regard to art will be considered by some unfitted for and impossible of realisation by any but the truly great; while others will accuse them of being indistinct, obscure, and difficult of application.

To both, however, it may be answered that the drama, such as I have described it, is in fact reserved solely for the truly great in art; that there is no reason why minds of lesser rank should not attempt less arduous works with applause and with profit to their readers; but that the Shakspeare of the new epoch will follow the path I have indicated, or none. It is the office of the critic to make known great general laws and to prefix the aim to the dramatist, even as it is the office of the dramatist to demonstrate by example the application of such laws, and the method of achieving such aim.

Criticism—as far as writers are concerned—points out the way, but does not lead. But criticism has another important mission at the present day; that of preparing a public, an arena, a people capable of comprehending the poet,—and this can only be done by examining the tendencies, passions, and hidden beliefs—more or less defined—of the people.

Hence some uncertainty and indefiniteness are

inevitable, because criticism has to foretell a world as yet existing only in the subjective sphere.

The educational mission of criticism will be to disengage the new conception from the ruins of the old, and propound the ultimate formula of that conception, whatsoever it be.

Possibly this ultimate formula may not be realised until a far more distant day; but so long as it truly expresses the thought of the epoch, it matters little when, as it matters little by whom, it is accepted and understood.

Meanwhile it is important that all eyes be turned in that direction, and all minds disposed to accept and hail the coming star of genius which will arise when the multitude shall be gathered together, not before.

In the genesis of the epochs, as in the Biblical genesis, God illumines the abyss with light before he sets the sun in the heavens.

FROM THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF THE ITALIAN EDITION OF MAZZINI'S LITERARY WORKS.

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I MIGHT have altered some of the secondary ideas contained in the articles here republished, but I have not done so. I believe that a writer should be willing to show himself to his readers not only as he is, but as he was, and that it may be useful to the young to observe how every man is, to a certain extent, modified by the influence of the times in which he lives, and the circumstances by which he is surrounded. Moreover, the importance of these writings does not lie in the absolute accuracy of every particular. What little importance they do possess lies in their general tendency and purpose, and the deep sense they manifest of the mission of art, and of that moral aim never to be betrayed by literature, and less than ever at the present day.

I say less than ever at the present day. And this is indeed so. Even as the eccentric action of a comet,

though powerful in its effect upon matter in a nebulous and diffused condition, is almost imperceptible upon a stable and organised solar system; so the irregularities or errors of a single intellect, which are innocuous in countries possessing a flourishing national literature, fortified by an universally venerated tradition, may become exceedingly dangerous where no true literature already exists, and it is our part—as in Italy—to create one.

When once the foundations of our national literature shall be laid, and the true tradition of Italian Thought shall be followed out by our writers and accepted by the people; when the vices sown during many centuries by priestly education and foreign tyranny shall be eradicated; our writers may venture to claim an amount of intellectual *liberty* which, at the present moment, they are bound to renounce. At present the *aim* must rule supreme over all individual inspiration. He who should allow his own individual tendencies or impulses to lead him from that aim would be false alike to his country and to art. Art is for us an educational priesthood, and our poets and artists should work, as many painters of the Umbrian school worked, kneeling in prayer.

The vices which have degraded our literature from the days of Charles V. downwards, and rendered it unworthy of Italy, are many. They are, courtly adulation of every power in turn; blind and servile respect for the vanity or prejudices of the native city,

academy, or *coterie* of the writer; irreverence towards our great men, eternally quoted, but never deeply studied; and that malignant envy of contemporary talent which has so often embittered both the life and death of men of true power and sincere patriotism. But the source of all these vices lies in the fact of our having—a few rare exceptions apart—separated our literature from the *life* of the nation and from the Italian Ideal, in order to follow in the footsteps of other literary schools—ancient or modern, Greek or French—all of them alien to our national records and national aspirations.

The tyranny which has denied us existence as a people—the absence of a centre, the visible representative of our collective Italian Thought—our language, written, but never spoken, save in a fraction of Italy—the weariness of a hateful and barren present, combined with the fascination exercised by the splendid memories of Greek art, allied to our own both through historical relationship and community of destiny, as well as of the Roman art which followed in its footsteps—all contributed to deprive our literature of spontaneity and originality, by throwing it back upon mere *imitation.*

Now, since it is impossible that any man, however earnestly he may endeavour to do so, should really transform himself into a man and citizen of a civilisation twenty centuries old, even our imitation did but reproduce the external form, not the inward conception and idea.

Materialism followed—the philosophy of peoples enslaved, or ready to become such—and extinguished even the desire of an ideal calculated to lead us back to our Italian tradition.

Materialism—may the youth of Italy mark my words, for verily the Italian future depends upon this question which I can but touch upon here—Materialism has perpetuated our slavery by poisoning our souls with egotism and cowardice. Materialism—between the martyrdom of Giordano Bruno, and the prison of Campanella—substituted for the idea that life is a mission and duty to be fulfilled, the idea that it is *a search after happiness;* and, since every noble form of happiness is withheld from those whose country is enslaved, even this idea of happiness was corrupted into an idea of *pleasure*, of the happiness of a day or hour, to be bought by gold, in the satisfaction of unworthy sensual passions. Materialism broke asunder that social bond, that instinct of collective brotherhood to which Rome and our early republics owed their greatness, to make the *individual* the centre, end, and aim of our every endeavour, and substituted for the idea—earlier conceived in Italy than elsewhere—of a providential educational design and common progress, the cold lifeless conception of a *fated* alternation of triumph and ruin, life and death.

Materialism corrupted the holy Dantesque idea of love into a base appetite, and the severe simplicity of our ancestors into the shameless libertinage that still

prevails to so great an extent among our Italian youth, and cancelled *woman* from the social world, by substituting for her the *female.*

Where there is neither reverence for woman, faith in a future, nor the sense of a duty to be fulfilled towards a whole people, there can be no true national literature.

And indeed, under the dissolving action of materialism, and of the causes I have mentioned, our literature vanished, and our poetry expired. It is true some *literati* and some poets were left, but isolated and apart from the people, unregulated by any general idea, and listened to only by a limited public, consisting of other *literati*, their patrons, and academies. Since that time Italy has produced writers of learned pedantry upon antique remains, or various readings of classic verse; endless commentaries upon Dante or others of our great men, containing not a single allusion to their prophecies of our future; writers of obscene novels in verse—a race unknown in England and Germany—such as Casti, Baffo, Batacchi, etc.; crowds of rhymsters about love, without a spark of true genius or feeling, and of panegyrists of locks of hair, of eyes, of hands—literary portrait-painters of the external form of woman without her soul.

Italy has seen, too, the more powerful of her sons—like Leopardi—regarding the earth as an abode of aimless suffering, the people as the *profane vulgar*, heaven as a desert without oasis or refuge for the

weary soul, offering no source of inspiration to the living, informed by no educating Providence, and having no connecting link with the destinies of humanity;—or, alternately prostituting their verse—like Monti—to sing Catholic persecution or republican terrorism; or cursing both the peoples and their governments, the slaves and their oppressors, like Alfieri.

To re-link, then, the intellect of Italy to our national tradition, and lead it through the national to the European Ideal,—such is the actual mission of literature amongst us. And the future will judge our poets and literary men by the extent to which they have realised this aim, and fulfilled this mission.

To study our historical records, the forgotten or misconceived works of our great men, the manifestations of the instincts of our people in the past, and thence to disinter the Italian Thought—to reveal that thought to all, and stimulate them to reduce it to action—to tell Italian youth of the greatness of their fathers, and teach them the causes of that greatness—to relate the story of their decay, and the causes of that decay—to call them back from dissolving analysis to creative synthesis, from the habit of viewing the universe in fragments, to the conception of the Unity which is the soul of the universe; from the materialism that looks not beyond facts themselves, to the study of the ideas that generate facts—to hold up to their veneration the men who have fought and suffered in defence of the banner of duty, and to reprobation

those who have abused the gifts of God, by denying or betraying that flag from egotism or love of pleasure—to instil into their hearts the conviction that great principles alone can create great peoples—to educate them to constancy against every obstacle, to hope during suffering, to faith during the triumph of evil, and to benevolence and affection in the midst of delusion and deception—to raise an altar to love, and join the hands of man and woman thereon in equal union—to raise on high the standard of the emancipation and brotherhood of the peoples;—such is the sacred duty of our writers at the present day.

We are watchers over a mystery of dawning life, over the cradle of a people. Are not scepticism and immorality impossible in the presence of a cradle?

Such is the tendency and purpose of all my writings, weak and inferior to the aim, as none know better than myself. But their tendency and purpose are right, and indicate the sole means of salvation for our country. For this reason I have consented to their republication. May others write in such wise, that my writings may soon be forgotten.

1862.

ON ITALIAN LITERATURE SINCE 1830.*

(Reprinted from the *Westminster Review*, October 1837.)

ITALY of late has been too much neglected in England. In politics, as in literature, our attention has been turned elsewhere; and readers might fancy, from the silence of the whole periodical press with regard to that unhappy country, that every symptom of social and intellectual existence had died with the betrayed hopes of 1831. Bold and extensive attempts at political change have been made since that period; and the journals have briefly informed us that the scaffolds of Genoa, Chambery, and Alexandria have been again moistened with blood. But without stopping to inquire into the source of these attempts—instead of recognising in their repetition, in their character, and, above all, in the end they proposed—so different from all that had preceded—an indication of vitality and progression; our guides saw in them only a fresh proof of the impotence of Italy for the work of self-regeneration. Yet, within these few years, important works, on very many subjects, have issued from the Italian press; a thousand

* Owing to unexpected delay in the arrival of the fourth volume of the Italian edition of Mr. Mazzini's works, this article could not be retranslated for the present volume.—*Translator's Note.*

circumstances have manifested, if not a direct and positive improvement, at least such tendencies as afford no discouraging picture of the actual state and future progress of the Italian mind. These indications have, however, passed unnoticed. Criticism is usually silent on the literature of Italy, or if it speaks, mentions her only to repeat, in worn-out phrases, a feeble mockery of gratitude towards the country which first trod the path we all have followed. A few names, more or less justly appreciated, have penetrated this indifference. Manzoni, Pellico—sometimes, but more rarely, Grossi and Nicolini—Botta in history, and Romagnosi in the philosophy of history and law, are perhaps all that have been heard of. To foreigners, these few stand as the representatives of the present century of Italian literature. Beyond these, nothing is known; no one seeks to know. France—on the faith of her poets—is assured that Italy is dead. England knows not if she be dead or living: the Italy of the past is well known to her; the Italy of to-day she deems undeserving her notice.

And can no more be produced than these five or six names, lauded from fashion rather than from knowledge? Is Italy so inert? And if there be any intellectual movement, what is its character, its direction? What are its tendencies? Such an inquiry will be interesting to all who can sympathise with a people, oppressed, but not broken—with a people numbering twenty millions, fallen, for so many

centuries, from the rank of a nation, and yet, from whom Europe has twice received the bond and the title of Union—once from Imperial Rome, and again from Catholic and Papal Rome. On this point those few celebrated names will teach us but little. They inform us, what indeed we knew before, that knowledge is power, in Italy as elsewhere, but they give us no key to the Italian mind. Far from that, I must begin by declaring that those names belong not to the present, still less to the future, but to the past. In a country like Italy, where there exists, thanks to the double tyranny of Austria and the Pope, no uniform and habitual action and re-action of the people on the literature and of the literature on the people, the secret impulses and aspirations of the "greatest number" cannot possibly be gathered from the reputation of a glorious few. That knowledge must be drawn from a lower source—from the works, numerous and diversified, though, it is true, of inferior genius, produced by writers of a secondary rank—from an uninterrupted observation of all that savours of intellectual development; the path it follows, and the principles it reveres. Certain exceptions, to be cited from the proceedings of the learned professions, form no standard by which to judge of the national progress. Where unity of purpose and knowledge is impossible, we must look to the works of individuals—stamped with the individuality of the producer;—from a multitude of these works alone shall we be able to say what may be hoped from a

country such as I have described; and in this light silence itself becomes important.

I do not pretend within the limits of this article to supply this disideratum—to fill the blank I have pointed out. I can only call attention to the actual intellectual state of Italy; gathering from many works recently produced the spirit of the age in Italy, and laying down a few directions for those who may be inclined to pursue the subject on a wider scale. To make this state completely understood, it would be necessary to remove from our path the wreck of that revolution which has occurred in Italy, perhaps with less noise, but as effectually as elsewhere; and search amidst the disorder for the imperceptible thread which is destined, at no great distance of time, to lead Italy to that philosophical and mental regeneration, the seeds of which were sown in her soil by the ill-appreciated master-minds of the sixteenth century. This would embrace at least the last fifty years, whilst my retrospection proceeds no farther than the year 1830. The following sketch, then, may be taken as the last chapter of a book which yet remains to be written.

In fixing on that year as a starting-point, I have no wish to create an impression that a new and powerful literary impulse was then given to the national mind. On the contrary, since 1830 Italian intellect has been little occupied with literature, being first absorbed by what was passing abroad, then by domestic occurrences, and lastly by the crisis of 1833.

Neither was there then a change in the character of the literary movement. Fortunately the events of 1830 produced in Italy no such change. I say *fortunately*, for the convulsion in France having worked out nothing new, having neither proclaimed nor applied any principle before unacknowledged, having, in short, only effected a precarious reconquest of some of those truths which had morally triumphed in 1789, but of the results of which the nation had been robbed;—the intelligence of Italy could see there no matter for any but unworthy imitation. I should rather choose, for the future destiny of Italy, that she should pursue in silence a path before untrodden.

In France, the movement of 1830 effected nothing in a literary point of view, save the extinction of Romanticism. Now that somewhat violent reaction against the literary creed and taste of the 18th century, had raised its standard in Italy (in the *Conciliatore*) years before it made its appearance in the *Globe* of Paris, or indeed (if we except the attempt made by Madame de Staël) anywhere in France. In 1830 it had already sunk into the grave. The literature of both languages passed within a brief space through the same phases—but in obedience to the laws of time and things, and not from the influence of the one country on the other. Romanticism, entombed amongst its laurels, left a blank in the literature of France which already existed in that of Italy. The want of a literature

which shall be positive and organic, which shall have a social aim, and shall be the minister of something greater and more valuable than itself—a want felt at this very day by the former country—had been already experienced by the latter. But in France this blank, this want, was freely expressed, and it characterises the entire literature of France at this moment; a literature in a state of transition, wavering between hope and despair. In Italy this was impossible: the absence of such a literature was compulsory. Little has been done there since 1830; but this little, however incomplete, is an advance, and enables us to forecast its future.

If, then, I commence my retrospect from 1830, I date from the point which marks, most decidedly, the blank I have spoken of, and the transition from one period of literature which was concluded to another which was about to commence.

Monti died in 1827, and in 1830 twenty years seemed to have passed over his tomb. No successor had appeared to replace him. The school of poetry over which he had presided rapidly sank, without a struggle, without a remonstrance, conscious that its course was run. It bore to the grave with it, as a consolatory evidence of its past power, the last remains of the empty, unmeaning, servile Arcadian Academy, at which Monti had levelled many a hardy blow, and which Romanticism finally crushed the moment it made its own appearance on the arena. Born during the period of that yearning for impro-

ment which Cesarotti, Alfieri, Parini, and others, had created in a greater or less degree in almost every branch of art; and graduating as a poet under the revolutionary afflatus which in Italy wrung from royal hands a few poor reforms, which had freed America, and was silently working its way in France, to break out into violence within so brief a space; Monti threw himself into the lists of poetry with all the haughty boldness of innovation. He contributed a large share to the work of literary emancipation; he shook the dictatorship of the academies and the servility of the pretended classic school,—a school which understood not those master-spirits they professed to exalt: which, not daring to gaze on the full refulgence of its masters, was content to imitate those who themselves were but imitators,—which had set rules, a framework, a skeleton, for all possible subjects and all possible minds. Monti's style was clear and forcible, without affectation. He proved by his example that the language of poetry might be elevated without marching on stilts. He had a style for every subject, and showed that the mould should be appropriate to the thought. He revived the energy, the nerve, the sensation, the life (in a word) of poetical *expression*, with draughts from the "pure well" of Dante; as Manfredi, Rolli, Lazzarini, Zanotti, and others, at the beginning of the 18th century had sought its renewal in that of Petrarca. But he did little for the *idea*, the spirit, the substance of poetry. More sensuous than sensitive—powerful in imagination, but not in know-

ledge of the heart—with a weak and undecided character, having neither profound conceptions in his mind nor a deep and holy faith within his soul, he seized but one side of life, the objective. He gave up his art to sensé and sensuous imagination; in his hands it became an air-bubble, reflecting by turns, in brilliant but superficial colours, all that was successively presented to it, without any bond of union or affinity. He received and obeyed all inspirations from without, from wheresoever and in whatever form they came. He depicted, but never transfigured, nature; he traced outlines, and fancied he had sculptured human beings. All the personages of his song resembled shadows such as those he employed to excess in his poems; there was nothing within, nothing characteristic, no individuality. But what is Poetry, if she present us neither individual types nor general truths fruitful in application? Thus Monti was not the restorer of poetry: with him the form indeed regained its youth, but that form remained without a soul. Metre, colouring, and harmony surrounded him with a meretricious brilliancy, ephemeral in its existence, unproductive of benefit to humanity, and devoid of any social object. To him and to his school Art was not only a means, but the end. Such was not the art of Dante; and the stanza of Manzoni—

> Salve o divino a cui largì natura
> Il cor di Dante e del suo Duca il canto;
> Questo fia il grido dell' età futura;
> Ma l' età che fu tua tel dice in pianto—

which compares him to Dante for his soul and to

Virgil for his melody, savours more of bitter irony than of the conscientious verdict of one poet on another. Dante would not have flattered in turn the Pope and the Emperor, Austria and the Revolution. Dante would not have sacrificed his art to the outward senses; he would have worshipped her as an angel on whose wings he might elevate his soul to heaven, and bring thence instruction for his fellows. Dante is the founder of a school which has few, very few, representatives in the present day, but whose star will arise again in that hour when the people shall decree the Nationality of Italy. Unless through a few inspirations genuinely lyrical in their conception, a few *morceaux* of exquisite finish in their form, and one or two cantos of the *Mascheroniana*, the name of Monti will only be known as that of a skilful troubadour. His school, which, by its cultivation of forms and absence of social aim, enclosed the germ of that now known in France by the phrase *L'art pour l'art*, has been extinct since 1830. Up to that time it numbered a long list of imitators, but at this day has only one deserving of mention, Cesare Arici of Brescia. Eminent as a versifier, but without any originality, after Foscolo had proved to him by an examination of his little verses, *In morte di Giuseppe Trenti*, that he was not the possessor of a single idea, Arici made up his mind, and thereafter thought of expression alone. Known in Italy by his *Pastorizia*, a mosaic of imitations from the ancients admirably done into Italian, he published, in 1833, the *Origine delle Fonti*, calcu-

lated for the same readers, remarkable for the same correct and coldly chaste expression, and the same absolute destitution of thought and originality. The last seven years have not produced a single writer besides himself as a representative of the school of which I have been speaking.

In the latter years of his life Monti witnessed the outbreak of Romanticism. He himself had led the way, and created a taste for innovation, without perceiving that every change in the forms of poetry must draw after it, sooner or later, a corresponding change in the spirit. The rising generation felt this. An indistinct opinion was diffused that some links of the chain had been broken, though intellect had not yet regained her liberty. Motion within her prison was all that had been granted; the sphere within which poetry might exercise her powers was still limited. She beheld the heavens through a grating, nature only in a mirror,—the entire universe under a veil, of which she was only permitted to raise a corner, sometimes on one side, sometimes on the other. The school of Monti, founded on the idea that Poetry was a second Painting, condemned the art to mere materialism; it translated images by images, and attained no further, wandering through a world of symbols without seeking their meaning. The new generation willed otherwise. Once on the path of liberty, they determined to make it all their own. They rose with the spirit of revolutionists to complete their emancipation. Blows were aimed to the right

and left, wherever obstacles to liberty existed. It was declared that whatever had existence, the beautiful, the homely, the past, the present, the real, the ideal, were all within the domain of art; and further, that poetry possessed the right not only of describing nature, but of interpreting her; that man and nature ought to be her principal topics, and that genius and the taste of the age were her only lawgivers. Thus was the past broken with, and the authority of its narrow systems overturned. Monti felt that he was outrun, that he had been passed by, and partly from contempt, partly from ignorance of the spirit of the times, raised his trembling and worn-out voice against the innovators, and uttered a flood of common-places to oppose what appeared to him barbarism and anarchy. He wrote some wretched verses in favour of that mythology which in his poetical manhood he had condemned, particularly in the dedication to his *Bardo della Forcsta nera.* No attention was paid him, and the work of destruction went on. He folded his cloak around him, with an indignant mien, and died in silence. Romanticism, master of the field of battle, thought the victory won: and so in effect it was, but it was a victory without decided results. A grand negation was all that had been accomplished. The dictatorship of the past had been irrevocably destroyed, but the future—the future, without the presentiment of which there can be no true poetry—this, Romanticism was unable to discover. Without a fixed theory, without a leading principle, without an

ascertained belief, in literature as in politics, there can be no secure foundation. Romanticism had torn aside the veil which before its coming had enveloped the universe, but recoiled with dread on beholding the infinity beyond. Hitherto all its inspirations, all its study, had no other source, no other arena, no other end than *man*, insolated, single, individual. How then, from this individuality, to arrive at a conception which should embrace in harmony those three terms within which art incessantly revolves—Man, the Universe, God. In quest of a creed which should re-attach the creature to the Infinite, Romanticism fell back on the past which it had just repudiated, or launched with closed eyes into the abyss before it. It had recourse by turns to the middle ages and to mysticism, and at length sank, wearied and discouraged. Such we find it in 1830.

By that time, all that was extravagantly romantic had run its course; all that was rational in the literary movement had triumphed. The liberty of literature had been achieved; and now came the question, how to apply this liberty? On what foundation, on what principles, should that new literature be based, the necessity for which was manifested by the existing vacuum? To what focus should the efforts of intelligence be made to converge? A feeling of nationality sprung up, and, as was natural, ma[redacted]y other. The whole literature was [redacted] this point. Men began to perceive the [redacted]sputing on questions of form,

when the very sources of literature had become polluted; they felt the absurdity of debating for and against popular and national poetry, when there existed neither people nor nation. They blushed at the time lost, at the immense mass of talent and activity, which Italian intellect had wasted for so many ages on a literature merely conventional, factitious, and aristocratic, which had nothing in common with the destiny of the nation, nor with the happiness of the greatest number. From that epoch, Mind bore the impress of Conscience, and all that was done wore the garb of utility and morality. Everything that has appeared since 1830 has an aim—an aim far other than that of flattering the ear or amusing the public. The intent of art has been elevated to the solution of the great problem of education, which bears within it the destinies of our age; everything trifling, futile, and academic has disappeared. Vittorelli, Metastasio, Frugoni, have disappeared; and if any feeble mediocrity still employs itself in this way, the world listens not. Silence, or the enunciation of something valuable, has become the law of intelligence. The shade of Dante, the poet of the nationality and of the regeneration of Italy, hovered on high over all this period, over its silence as over its utterance. Men returned to the study of Dante, not to seek in him forms, or images, or metres, but to revive the fainting muse by his powerful and masculine thought, thence to draw holy inspirations of patriotism and humanity

Editions of the *Divina Commedia* were multiplied; new commentaries made their appearance, amongst which, that of Ferdinando Arrivabene, *Il secolo di Dante, commento storico* (2 vols., 1830, Florence), deserves to be distinguished. Papers on Dante were to be met with in all the periodicals, particularly in the *Antologia* of Florence, now suppressed. Others were promised; amongst the rest, an historical sketch of Italy, from the empire of the Lombards to the time of Dante, by Charles Troya of Naples, already known by his *Veltro allegorico*, intended as an introduction to the poem.

This effervescence of Dantism, of such good augury; this tendency to place under his patronage, as it were, the movement of Italian intelligence, is due also in great part to an influence, of which the literary men of the present day in Italy, half from prudence, half from ingratitude, say too little, but which will none the less incontestably continue to direct the current of Italian criticism. I allude to Foscolo. Numerous were the volumes on Dante before Foscolo; a crowd of writers had proposed him as a model; but they studied him as grammarians and philologists, or at the most, *æsthetically*. Foscolo was perhaps the first who undertook the study and the culture of Dante as of a profound patriot. I say *undertook*, for Foscolo did not realise all that he was capable of. The miseries of a life of poverty, wandering, and excitement; the misfortunes of Italy and exile, were always obstacles.

But he recognised in Dante more than the poet,—more than the creator of a language; he recognised in him the great citizen—the reformer—the poet of the religion, the prophet of the nationality, of Italy. Where others had amused themselves in dissecting and torturing words, he dived for ideas; where others had admired images, he sought for the feeling which had suggested them. He led criticism on the path of history, refuting all the groundless conjectures which had been heaped on the life and poems of Dante. He annihilated all the crowd of heartless commentators who, without a spark of patriotism, had dared to lay a hand on the work of a man all soul, all knowledge, all patriotism. He drove from the temple the money-changers and the Pharisees. His may not be a perfect commentary on Dante; but he rendered such a work possible. More than this—by his whole literary life, by the exalted aim he attributed to poetry, by the inexorable war he waged on all who prostituted her by their venality or by their imposture, he dignified the profession of literature, and gave a standard of morality to art. At the present day it is sought to forget him. A part of his manuscripts remain unpublished. Two-thirds of his labours on Dante lie mouldering in the drawer of an English publisher (Pickering).* The memoir published of him is rather a libel than a

* Foscolo's labours on Dante consisted of the correction of the text of a portion of the *Divina Commedia* with a valuable *Discorso sul Testo.* Mazzini afterwards completed the work, and the Foscolo-Mazzini edition, in four handsome well-printed volumes, is the best edition of

Life. But the youth of Italy remember him with affection, and since 1827, the year of his death, his influence, far from decreasing, grows stronger daily.*

the *Divina Commedia* existing. It is published by P. Rolandi, Berners Street, Oxford Street.—*Translator's Note.*

* A complete edition of the works of Foscolo is a want in Italian literature. It is, however, impracticable in Italy. Ruggia, a publisher at Lugano, a Swiss-Italian town, undertook some time since to supply this void; but I have seen nothing of his work since the prospectus, and know not if the first volume has appeared; I doubt, moreover, whether it would be complete. A Life of Foscolo is at this moment ready, the work of a man in possession of peculiar information on his subject; but what I know of the bent of mind and personal position of the writer leaves me little hope that his labour will prove equal to the moral requirements of his task. To write the Life of Foscolo in a manner worthy of the subject and beneficial to his country, demands a man who, writing the first page on the tomb of the exile at Chiswick, would, if it were necessary, compose the last in prison. A considerable number of Foscolo's letters have been printed within these few years in the literary journals of Naples and Piedmont, and in various publications in Lombardy. They are, I believe, unknown in England; and I think I shall oblige my readers by introducing to them one addressed to Monti, dated June 13, 1810, and doubly important as it vindicates the noble character of Foscolo, so often and so erroneously attacked for his rupture with Monti, and as it gives a sort of moral confirmation to the sketch I have just drawn of the literary features of the two men:—

"I send you a little book in which, to give the lie to the report of our being at open war, I have spoken of you. But I have spoken of you for the last time, and now I am writing to you for the last time. It is proper I should tell you why.

. . . . . .

"The same impetuosity which hour after hour makes you friend and enemy of some man or other has led you to believe and to repeat several accusations against me. I know that some persons, amongst others Mustoxidi and Pieri (to whom I gave perhaps moderate praise, not from want of esteem, but because I am not in the habit of giving or receiving Pindaric laudations in prose) have told you that I spoke ill of your *Homer*. I did say, indeed, that several things in the first book did not please me, but that the second, on the contrary, appeared to me to be admirably translated. However, although I could read in your countenance the irritation which others had fomented, I contented

But I must return to my subject. The manifestations of which I have spoken do but indicate an aspiration towards a national literature, and a national

myself with speaking of it with some bluntness to the Creons, always expecting that you would come to ask me an explanation as frankly as you have done at other times, when, for instance, Ceretti played the Creon towards us. You have not done so; but you go about saying and writing that I am hated even by those who welcome me to their houses. They write to me from Mantua that you now condemn those same literary opinions which you have so often applauded in me as just and virtuous. I have in my hand a letter to that effect, which has been written by you against me—an old friend—to some new friends. This document and those reports have been sent to me without any request on my part, and I defy the world to find a letter of mine which speaks of you otherwise than to praise your works. Be more prudent then in writing against old friends, and in trusting yourself to new ones. Know at once that for several years they have been looking for an adversary for you, of greater eminence than the Giannis, the Coureils, the Lampredis, and less easily pacified than the Bettinellis and the Mazzas. For some years many people have believed that you fear me for my manner of thinking, and that I envy you for your manner of writing. I will furnish you a thousand instances of the zeal with which I have everywhere in public protected your name from calumny, even to the extent of publicly giving a blow to one who was aspersing you, and bringing on myself a duel. Now-a-days, these same wretches, divided into parties, attach themselves to me; others, by their speeches and writings, wish to excite us to the field; and as fast as I drive the whole set away from me, they will go to swell your party.

"As for me, I will cut off my hand before writing a single word against you. I know that you have said in several places that I am the *court Cato*, and that you have meanly alleged as a proof a salute that I gave, whilst walking, to the carriage of the *Gran Giudice*. I know that you have threatened to *scatter the dust of my Tombs*." [An allusion to "I Sepolcri."] "Monti! we shall both go down to the tomb; you the more lauded, doubtless, and I perhaps the more mourned. Eulogium will speak in your epitaph; and in mine—I am sure of it—will be read, that born and bred with strong and bad passions, I have yet preserved my pen unpolluted by falsehood. But perhaps my name will be buried with me.

"Of my writings you will speak as you please; for myself, I shall forget that you have praised them. But since many of our fellow-citizens

literature cannot exist in Italy for the present; the political question must first be solved. Since 1830 art has more than ever clashed with the oppressor and his fears. The moment poetry attained a glimpse of a serious and important aim she was compelled to silence. Songs, such as those of Berchet, may be sung only in a foreign land. Much national poetry—and I could name several pieces which might take their place beside the best which Europe has produced of late years—remains unpublished and unknown. Opposed by insurmountable obstacles, literature has taken refuge in the bye-ways of art, all leading towards a national aim, all tending more or less directly to social amelioration.

The school of Manzoni is, whilst I am writing, the dominant school; perhaps more from earlier reminiscences than present activity. Its aim, its creed,

may not forget it, leave to Lampredi, to Guillon, to Lattanzi, and their companions, the business of tearing me to pieces. They will add personal malignity towards *the enemy of the courtiers and grandees of my time*, —a malignity which will do me more harm than all their literary criticism. You have condemned these men to infamy; and now, to earn your friendship, they offer me to you, as the sacrifice of reconciliation. Let them, my dear Monti; but, for the love of heaven, do not fraternise anew with them. Let them, and welcome, live in their illusions, so the Philebi who torment you will leave you in peace, and they will lose their time in barking round me. Myself—I am more patient and more hard of hearing. The wretches cannot rob me of my name. As for places and favours, you know that I have none, and that I have no fear of losing any. Nevertheless, if you should attack me by writing, or rather by speaking as you are accustomed to do in the unhappy moments of your passion, I shall be silent; but beware, for the heart of many an Italian breast will perhaps, with a shuddering indignation, respond for me. . . . UGO FOSCOLO."

its pervading feeling, is the moral and social reinstatement of the people. This sentiment pervades all its productions, and pierces through the disguise which circumstances impose, and which this school submits to with tolerable grace, owing to the timid and wavering character of its principal chiefs. The flag of Christian equality may be clearly seen presiding over all that has been accomplished by the school of Manzoni. Their choice of subjects, their manner of treating them, the style they adopt, all proclaim that the grand object is to beat down the usurpation and power of the aristocratic principle. If it be sought to stigmatise wilfulness, lust, selfishness, the model is almost always taken from the rich, the titled, the offspring of the feudal system. If the design be to pourtray innocence, goodness, devotedness, the son or daughter of the people, the simple mountaineer, the poor fisherman, furnishes the type;—and again, between these extremes of contrast, between the oppressor and the victim, stands the man of God, the priest, the mediator, the consoler,—sometimes the energetic defender of the right, as in the olden times of Christianity, administering balm to the righteous in the day of their trouble, and inflicting remorse on the breast of the impious. Injustice is conquered; repentance purifies the soul of the oppressor, or he dies in the midst of his career; or, if it be innocence that sinks, the calm of religious belief, the faith of a blissful hereafter, smoothes the sufferer's pillow and soothes the hour of dissolution. Across this scene, always

nearly uniform as to the groundwork, pass singly or in groups maidens, delicately formed, gentle, submissive, religious; loving purely, enduring, praying, and dying angelic deaths amidst hope and resignation; tender, devoted, and pious mothers; men of the sword, and men of the gown—and all these in turn relate to you their history in a clear and popular style, perhaps slightly enervated and emasculate, with an affectation of idioms and a fondness for analysis. All this is well done, is executed with talent of the first order and with an exquisite sensibility, but is yet unsatisfactory, because unequal to the necessities of the times and the demands of the country. Reverence for an aristocracy is not so rooted in Italy as to require such urgent opposition. Her sons need confidence, concord, activity, constancy, and devotion to the public cause. Of all this I find nothing in these productions. The reinstatement of the people is, according to them, to be attempted in the spirit of individuality,—as if the work of education could ever be accomplished in an enslaved land by taking the inhabitants one by one. Collective action is so little favoured that every movement of the people *en masse* is noticed with ridicule or disapprobation. Yet these writers preach the importance, the necessity, of religious feeling; as if a *common* faith were not the essence of religion, or as if, in a country where religious feeling had been considerably weakened, it could be revived otherwise than by a grand national inspiration, or as if

one could hope to regenerate man without raising him in his own esteem, and investing him with dignity from a conviction of the importance of the part he is called to perform. The destiny of man on this earth, as regards society, forms no part of the moral aim contemplated by the disciples of this school. They have never spoken to man in terms like these:—"Advance, perform, strive; pull up evil by the root; the country God has given thee should be the theatre of thy labours; all that defiles her, degrades thee; thou shouldst be to thy country what thy country should be to the whole human race, a means of helping it forward towards perfection." No, this is their language:—"Humble thyself, pray, be resigned to thy misfortunes; heaven is thy country: the things of this world are unworthy thy attention; knowledge is vanity; and justice here below a dream."

All that I have just said is not chargeable, I am aware, on the entire school. It flows rather from their system and their choice of means than from their conviction. But I am compelled to point out this contradiction between the means and the end, for Manzoni, Grossi, and Pellico are names of power, calculated to seduce youth into a servile imitation. Italy has resignation enough; the moral improvement of an enslaved nation must be begun by knocking off her fetters.

I need not here discuss the *Mie Prigioni* of Silvio Pellico; *Marco Visconti*, a romance of the

14th century, by Grossi; *Ettore Fieramosca,* an historical romance, by Massimo D'Azeglio, a native of Piedmont, son-in-law to Manzoni, and a distinguished painter; and some other well-known works which have emanated from this school since 1830. Nearly all have been translated into English, and my readers may themselves judge of the merits and defects I have pointed out. Pellico soared his highest in the first-named work. The *Cantiche,* which he has recently published, are not of much value; the tragedies of still less. In both there are *morceaux* remarkable for sweetness and pathetic simplicity, but which cannot of themselves constitute a drama or a poem.* *Marco Visconti,* in my opinion not sufficiently appreciated, contains, particularly in the second part, some passages of great beauty; but imitation is too visible, the *tableau* is not historically perfect, and the execution is hardly ever forcible. Grossi, born a poet, and a poet of the heart, of the affections, of the deeper feelings, and of sufferings borne with piety, is not at ease in the combats, the animated and complicated scenes of historical romance—the Bellini of poetry, gifted like him with a genius thoroughly elegiac, he should return to the style he so beautifully outlined in his enchanting *Ildegonda,*† from which the unjust criticisms on his

* A new volume of poems has just appeared, on which I should be scarcely warranted in pronouncing a judgment; but a very hasty glance at the first part of the volume has not altered the opinion expressed above.

† This style he has this year resumed in his *Ulrico e Lisa,* a tale in

Lombardi appear to have driven him. The last scenes of Azeglio's romance have real merit; they are eminently the inspiration of patriotism; but he is in general coldly correct, and wanting in poetical fervour. Other names less known deserve to be mentioned, and should be ranged under the same banner; that of Louis Carrer of Padua, author of a collection of ballads which often make happy approaches to that poetry for the people of which Italy has so much need, and some hymns which betray a profound feeling for nature, and a love of reflection too rarely met with; J. B. Giorgini, a young man whose *Preludi Poetici*, published at Lucca in 1836, announce a poet of estimable and delicate feeling; Giulio Carcano, who, though only twenty-three years old, combines—in his *Ida della Torre*, an historical tale in five cantos, published at Milan in 1834—great poetical capacity with more avowed patriotic sentiment; Betteloni also, whose stanzas *To the Virgin*, and poem entitled *Lago di Garda*, are remarkable for purity of design as well as harmony, and show considerable power; and, above all, Samuel Biava, a Lombard, whose *Melodie Liriche* and *San Rocco*, or the *Pellegrino Evangelico of the 13th century*, published at Milan in 1833, evince great poetical endowments, which need only a little more clearness and patience for their full display. There are others whom the brevity of my sketch compels me to omit. The *Ricog-*

verse, published by Ferrario of Milan; but with what success I know not, as the work has not yet fallen in my way.

litore, a monthly periodical published at Milan, may be considered as the literary journal of this school.

Confronting these, stands marshalled a party inspired by a different spirit, whose characteristic is vehemence—an emanation from Foscolo, and, in a wider sense, from Byron. This party affect no disguise; their road has no winding; they march straight to their goal. "The nation" is inscribed on their flag, and their watchword is "never-ending struggle." The nationality they preach is that of the Middle Ages, distrustful, hostile, and revengeful. The struggle they proclaim, and which speaks out in every thought and in every sound, is a struggle against domestic oppression and against foreign influence, whether for good or ill; a struggle against the entire world and, I am forced to say it, against God himself, whenever the Deity appears to them to sanction, by his toleration, the evil which happens around them. Potent from their enthusiasm and still more from their passion, they scatter their curse more widely than their blessing; and when the hand is raised even for benediction, it seems to brandish a sword, so fierce, so startling is the attitude. They worship strength, and therefore seek to possess it; thence also they seek to invigorate the enfeebled souls of their contemporaries by pointing to what the will can perform when devoted to the pursuit of a definite object. Everything with them is elevated some degrees above reality. Their men, good or bad, are men of iron, great by crime or great by virtue; their remonstrances are imprecations,

their love is a whirlwind, and their smile a sarcasm. From the unbridled, feverish, and tempestuous passions, they compose *tableaux* which are magnificent; but when the theme is innocence, love, self-restraint, their muse flags, and we feel she has left her proper element. All their visions are of their country,—powerful, menacing, perhaps victorious,—before whom friends and enemies tremble, having, like Israel, her God, her worship, her law, and her battles. Ulterior destinies form no part of their anxiety; their faith in them is small; nay, they disdain them. "Live or die," they exclaim, "what matter? Life and death are nothing in themselves; but live nobly, die nobly; greatness is strength!" They incline to unbelief from theory, but an instinct of the heart, or oftener still of the imagination, prevents their total lapse. They have no faith save in a resolute struggle against evil. They acknowledge not infinity, but bear a witness of it within them.

There are but two of the productions conceived in this spirit deserving of mention: the *Battaglia di Benevento*, by Guerrazzi of Leghorn, and the *Assedio di Firenze*, by Anselmo Gualandi;* the first, dated 1827, and the last published at Paris in 1836. This is no matter of surprise if we consider the tendency of their writings, which, though responded to by many youthful hearts, is forbidden all outward manifestation; the two historical romances I have named are acts of

* Guerrazzi published the *Assedio di Firenze* under the name of Gualandi to avoid the persecutions of the Tuscan government.

courage, which have excited the persecution and *surveillance* of the Italian police.

There exists not, at the present day, a writer more powerful than Guerrazzi, in energy, imagination, and that holy indignation which, in the present state of things, should animate the breast of every Italian. With talent eminently lyrical, open to every lofty inspiration of the present and the past, of the real and of the ideal, he condenses in himself all that I have said of the school to which he belongs, and which he was the first in Italy to give voice to. The *Assedio di Firenze*, little, if at all, known in England, well deserves to be so. It evinces more than talent, and often rises to genius of a high order. It has life enough for fifty novels, and poetry enough for five poems. The introduction, the chapter in which Michelangiolo receives a secret mission, the openings of several chapters, and the conclusion, betray rare and unrivalled talent. The last agonies of Florence, the struggles of Francesco Ferrucci against his enemies, and the fatality of which they were the ministers, are described and painted with a master-hand. The story sometimes rises to the dignity of the epic. The shade of the ancient liberties of Florence hovers over pages consecrated to those magnificent recollections which should plant remorse in the breasts of her unmindful and degenerate sons. We see before us an ancient and noble monument illuminated by the rays of a modern sun —gilding but not penetrating it; and this, in my

opinion, is the defect of the work. The past is indeed there in all its fulness, its grandeur, and its glory; the inspiration of the future, the inspiration of the People is wanting. The pageantry is of overwhelming splendour; but we have bitterness and despair where there should be faith. We desire to be buried with Ferrucci, under his country's ruins, rather than to live for her restoration; and though the mind of the author might retain its power and activity, after imprecating a curse on the human race, the mass are of a different calibre. Men capable of self-devotion from a sense of duty, without a calculation of results, are rare; what passes itself off as devotedness is often nothing more than the extravagance of hope. The spirit which breathes in these political romances will, I fear, create more misanthropes than martyrs.

The following extract from the introduction to the *Assedio di Firenze* will be amply sufficient to give an idea, not of the power of the writer—for the work abounds in passages far more striking—but of characteristic tendencies of his school:—

"But I concealed the sorrow that possessed me, and whenever a mournful duty required me to address the crowd, turning to the young alone,—for the times had taught me that grey hairs were not a crown of wisdom to the hoary head,—that each year plucked out a virtue, and that man became clay long ere the breath had departed:—Turning, I say, to none but the young, I admonished them thus:

—'Brothers, I exhort you to be great: true, my flesh quivers whilst uttering such a phrase, but God forbid that fear should deter me from the manifestation of lofty sentiments. There exists in creation a law which says—Be great and unhappy: but there exists another law, still more universal, which ordains —Be man and die. If nothing then can ward off death, what does life present that you should preserve it at the price of dishonour? Perhaps you envy the drop from heaven which falls silently and unnoticed, and loses itself in the sea? Who would not rather choose one day of the existence of a bird —a day of song, of flight—who would not prefer one minute of thunder, one minute of sublimity and brightness, to centuries of the sepulchral worm? Weighty ills will attend you—your lacerated heart will break—you will die: but in the hour of death you will call to mind the exile of Dante, the chains of Columbus, the stripes of Machiavelli, the prison of Galileo, the ravings of Tasso; and from these recollections you will acquire fortitude for that lot which the race of torturers will provide for you. The tyranny of man, which appeared to you a colossus of brass, will become an objeet of contempt when you detect the feet of clay, and you will dissipate the vision as easily as Dante's angel chased from his face the smoke of hell.'

"So spoke my lips, while my soul withered in bitterness. But a voice from within me answered thus:—'God doth not always repent him that he

hath created man. Thou livest in an age which excelleth in worthlessness all comparison with the meanest metal. Search history, and thou wilt find there times according to thy heart. Wrap thyself in memory. From the virtues of the dead seize arguments to chastise the crimes of the living. The noble deeds of the dead will give thee hope in the virtues of those who are to come, for nothing under the sun endureth for ever, and on this earth vicissitudes of good and evil continually alternate. Thou shalt live a life of visions of the past and the future.'

" I opened the volume of history in quest of this epoch of human felicity, and I read with the gasping breath of a dying man who longs for the light. Ah! how many days were spent in vain! Ah! how often, sorrowful but not despairing, did I lay my head on the fatal pages, exclaiming, 'I shall be happier to-morrow.' To-morrow came, and the day after, and the next, and still thick darkness on every side. This is the history of the brutes of the forest!—I threw away the book, but with the book I did not throw away the knowledge of evil. Ye wakeful nights over the volumes of those who have preceded me, resistless agony for knowledge, what fruit did ye bring to my soul? Out of dejection and sorrow I have woven the winding-sheet of hope.

" I looked on Italy, and beheld a race spring up, overrunning the world to fetter the creature of God's workmanship; then the patience of the oppressed

changed to fury, the iniquity of ages fell, and then came the day of anger; barbarous hordes drove before them, as shepherds their flocks, other barbarians towards our country. The torrent spread from the Alps to Reggio. One throne became the lever to overthrow another, and we, the unhappy vanquished, bore the marks of the fall of each. Civic broils succeeded priestly strife. Guelfs and Ghibellins; Bianchis and Neris; Montecchis and Cappellettis; Maltraversis and Scacchesis; Bergolinis and Raspantis; blood on every stone in the villages, blood on every tower in the cities; republics contentious, despicable, perpetually warring with each other; within and without lustful and avaricious tyrants, afraid even of the night, and yet of unbounded cruelty; betraying and betrayed; men put up for hire, Italian souls bartered for gold; illustrious cities treating with base marauders; lofty intellects bowing to the ferocious ignorance of the priests; finally, as the tempest arises from the bottom of the deep, tyranny advances, pollutes heaven and earth, creates a wilderness, changes the very nature of the soul, and yet endures. . . . Put not your confidence in hope,—she is the strumpet of life.

"Does then an inexorable destiny condemn us like the serpent of old, to feed always on the dust, and wear away the future, giving out no sound save that of the scourge, the lashing of the back and the clanking of the feet in chains?

"Who says this? Power hath concluded no eternal compact with any nation of the world.

What man's hand has stripped the wings of Victory? At Rome the thunder burnt them, but they took to growing with time, and she flew away. So long as your hands when raised to heaven feel the weight of hostile fetters, pray not. God holds with the strong! The measure of your abasement is full: to sink lower is impossible; life consists in motion, therefore you shall rise. Meanwhile bear rage in your heart, menace on your lips, death in your hand. Break to pieces all your divinities; adore no other God than him of *Sabaoth*, the spirit of battles. Ye shall rise. The hand of the Northern demon, which he foolishly thrust between the wheels to arrest the chariot of time, trembles, grows weak, and will be broken. Could we lay a hand on his heart, we should learn that the greatest part of its pulsations are excited by fear. But if it were given us to lay a hand on his heart, it would not be to count the pulsations. Oh no! let him live to die beneath the edifice he has erected; ere he be entombed let him hear the epithets of infamy which the oppressed hurl at the oppressor abandoned by power. Let him die suffocated by the smoke of the cannons which will announce our victory; let him despair as he hears the drums saluting the first beams of our regeneration. Once more our colours shall fly over the towers of our enemies, terrible to the sons of the Cimbri; the shade of Marius shall break the cerements of his ancient sepulchre; once more shall we trail through the dust to the Capitol the crowns of

the tyrants of the nations.—And shall we then be happy? What matters it! Come, oh come ye days so dear to Italian pride! Bitter is the pleasure of oppressing, but it is a pleasure, and vengeance for atrocious crimes is grateful even to the spirit of God."

Between these two opposite tendencies in the literary world, answering to two which exist in great activity in the social world, but with which I have no concern here, is placed, making advances sometimes to one, sometimes to the other, a sect without a name—a certain number of individuals professing a literary eclecticism, who hesitate between imitation and innovation, between the ancient and the modern. Some, like Nicolini, the author of *Foscarini* and of *Procida*, and Charles Marenco, a native of Ceva in Piedmont, clothe a classic outline in the drapery of Romanticism. Others, like Leopardi of Recanati (who died at Naples on the 14th of June), endeavour to express the feelings and the thoughts of the present day in a form and style savouring of the classics. Neither the dramas of the first nor the Petrarchian songs of the second at all deserve, in my opinion, the high reputation they have acquired from the sentiments of patriotism with which they abound. The former contain pieces of exquisite poetry, and the latter breathe a spirit of profound melancholy, a characteristic of the age, but they are nevertheless the efforts of a transi-

tionary period, which the future is destined to efface. The productions of Rosini, and others of a similar value, appear to me of inferior rank to those I have just cited. Equally beneath the actual necessities of the age as works of art, they are, moreover, destitute of aim or intention as regards social regeneration. There are a few beautiful scenes scattered here and there through the historical romances of Varese, Falconetti, and some others, but nothing peculiarly characteristic, nothing that will reach posterity.

Such is the character of the literary movement in Italy, in its principal divisions. As yet, it has not produced any very important effects, but whatever are the means it makes choice of, a feeling for nationality, for freedom, for equality, a hatred of artificial distinctions, is predominant. This feeling is equally, or perhaps still more, predominant in another branch of literary labour, of higher importance to a people striving towards regeneration; I refer to works of history.

There are in this branch a crowd of works altogether unknown to English readers which are well worthy attention, and which ought to excite our astonishment whenever we think of the difficulties of all kinds, of the state of subjection and territorial partition, under which they were produced. Since 1830 historical research has taken a significant flight. A history, such as that of Milan, by Verri, of which but a single copy was sold at the time of its publication,

now reckons several reprints and three or four continuations. Nicolini, though installed by public opinion, justly or not, in the poetical throne, has forsaken the muse and condemned himself to a silence* which has already endured seven years, to seclude himself in painful study, and intends shortly, I believe, to present its results in a history of the House of Swabia—a history which will prove of much higher interest than that of Raumer, who some time since gave us a Ghibelline version, while, in my opinion, the key to Italian history must be sought in the policy and the

* For myself, I cannot help rejoicing at such a change. In spite of the scattered beauties to be met with in his dramas, in spite of numerous verses glowing with the true Italian spirit, and which so easily fix themselves in the memory, Nicolini was born, according to my opinion, to be a prose-writer; now that both Botta and Grassi are dead, Italy cannot perhaps produce his superior. He inherits the manner of Foscolo, whose style—let me proclaim it in the face of a whole set of pedants who feed upon syllables, and confound incessantly style with language—is that which approaches the most, especially in his dissertations on Dante and Boccaccio, to that sober, logical, severe, and energetic manner which shuns periphrasis and pleonasm, complex construction and the *lascivie toscane*, and accords with the national language. He is full of nerve, throbbing energy, and life. His writings on the fine arts, on Orcagna, and, above all, his admirable pages on Michelangiolo, are welcome to every reader. In him the force of the thought and that of the expression are perfectly poised. The *pectus est quod disertum facit* meets in his prose a fine application.

Such is not the case with a writer who has enjoyed too great a renown in Italy, and whom I have not mentioned, for I have been at a loss under what tendency to range him; Pietro Giordani. My business here is to trace out the course of ideas, and Giordani offers too often only words. These words are perfectly chosen, and most artificially arranged; each of them has passed through the crucible of the nicest criticism in matter of language; but did ever words alone constitute a great writer? Does a profound knowledge of the language suffice to create a style? Ideas only can do so: and great thoughts make the great writer.

spirit of the Guelfs. It is perceived that nationality can be founded only on history and language;* and the existing want in this respect has been felt. Notwithstanding the historical models with which Italy abounds—notwithstanding the recent labours of Sismondi—the history of the Italian people remains to be written. The historians of Italy have painted the vicissitudes of the different states with exquisite talent; they have distinguished the particular motives of the actions of individuals with remarkable acumen; they relate the consequences of these motives and of these actions upon the country and the age with a power of expression which has never been surpassed; but they have never traced the regular development of that popular principle which has been steadily progressive whilst every other has fallen or been transformed, and which alone can give to the history of the Italian peninsula the unity so long desired. Though the idea I have but just glanced at may not have been worked out, or even distinctly laid down, it is impossible not to perceive that it is the leading

So, despite of his external beauties, his manner is cold and contracted: his style is clear and transparent, but there is nothing at the bottom. His periods are harmonious; but it is the harmony of a brook that purls and runs gently on and lulls to sleep, and the Italians want anything but sleep. There are some exceptions to be made in his works; for instance, in his speeches for *le Legazioni*.

* I have not room here to enter into an examination of the present state of the language, and of the principal works lately produced on this subject, but my brief sketch would be deficient in an important point did I not at least mention the name of Giuseppe Grassi, one of the best prose-writers, known for his edition of Montecuccoli, and for his *Dizionario Militare Italiano*, in four volumes, published at Turin in 1833.

and directing feature in the labours of Italian historians; and the results which must ensue from it are infallible. In Italy the lessons of history must lead to the fusion of the people—the combination of all the provinces into one nation.

Since 1830 especially, all that has been done in history has taken the direction I have pointed out. No one has produced an Italian history; in Italy as she is, such a work is impossible. The hardy attempt of Cesare Balbo to supply the want was compelled to stop, if we are rightly informed, at the third volume. The Gothic and Lombardic periods may indeed be handled with safety, and this he has done in a work of great interest, though not exempt from faults. But a faithfully-executed and complete history of Italy, *published at Turin*, is a contradiction; it is to be hoped, therefore, that Count Balbo will not attempt it, and will confine himself to the three volumes which appeared there in 1830. At present nothing can be done beyond collecting and arranging the materials for such a history; and this preparatory labour has been by no means neglected. Each province, each city of importance, has, or is about to have, its annalist. Amongst the best works of that kind may be named the *History of the Ancient Laws of Piedmont*, by the Count Frederic Sclopis, published at Turin in 1833—a work *On the Finances of the Kingdom of Savoy*, by Luigi Cibrario —the *History of Chieri*, by the same author—an excellent *History of Como*, by Cæsar Cantù, and

another, now in course of publication, which relates *The Events of the Brianza*, by Ignazio Cantù—Fabio Mutinelli's book *On the Commerce of the Venetians*, published at Venice in 1833—*Notes on Pavia*, by Robolini, of which the first volume appeared in 1830—the *Memoirs, Historical and Political, of Casalmaggiore*, by Giovanni Romani—*Memoirs of the City and Marquises of Saluzzo*, to the year 1548, edited by the Avvocato Delfini Muletti; others also might be quoted. The Count Pompeo Litta is pursuing with extraordinary pains, and under the disadvantage of inadequate funds, but yet with admirable perseverance, his important and very impartial account of *The Celebrated Families of Italy*. By his researches on *The Venetian Inscriptions*, Emanuele Cicogna has opened the way to a storehouse of historical information hitherto too much neglected. At Reggio, in the Duchy of Modena, where every other kind of historical pursuit would have been looked on with suspicion, literary history has been cultivated; and we have a continuation of the literary history of Tiraboschi in *Biographical Notices of the Writers of the Dominions of the House of Este*. The *Biography of the Illustrious Italians of the Eighteenth Century and their Contemporaries*, published at Venice under the superintendence of Tipaldo, contains a good deal of important matter, though with perhaps too many insignificant names and too much attention to trifles. On the one hand, the influence which Italy has exercised on foreign countries has furnished matter for researches like

those contained in the travels in Poland of Professor Sebastian Ciampi, published at Florence in 1831—in the *Critical Bibliography of the Ancient Relations of Italy with Poland, Russia, and other Northern States*, published in 1834—and in the volume by Luigi Sauli, published at Turin in the same year, *On the Genoese Colony at Galata*, a valuable work, embracing the history of the commerce of Genoa from its first connection with Constantinople to the extinction of the colony in the time of Mahomet the Second, with a number of unpublished commercial treaties between the Greek emperor and the Genoese commonwealth. On the other hand, search has been made in foreign countries for documents which might throw light on the literary history or domestic policy of Italy. The Italian manuscripts in the Royal Library of Paris were described and illustrated there, in 1833, by Doctor Marsand, professor at Padua, Giuseppe Molini has ransacked the libraries of France for documents on Italian history, of which two volumes were published at Florence this year. This last work is valuable for papers, circulars, treaties, contracts, unpublished letters of Louis XII., Francis I., Alexander VI., Julius II., Giovanni de' Medici, and a crowd of other eminent names; as also from the notes and judicious introduction by Gino Capponi, from whom we are led to hope for a history of the Tuscan reformer, the Grand Duke Leopold. This publication of M. Molini, if encouraged, may supply a great desideratum, by forming, in some sort, a con-

tinuation of the *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores* of Muratori. Another work, still more in accordance with the wants of the age, is that *On the Italian Municipalities*, which C. Morbio, a young man already known by his *History of Novara* (Milan, 1832), has undertaken at Milan, and of which two volumes are before the public, the one relating to Ferrara and Pavia, and the other to Faenza and Novara. It contains a mass of original documents hitherto unpublished, some of which go back to the first establishment of municipal rights in Italy; and if, in carrying on the design, the author will pay a little more attention to style, and superintend more zealously the correction of the press, a point so essential in publications of this kind, he will render a great service to Italy and to history in general.*

To these works, and several others which I am compelled to omit, may be added two histories of Genoa, of which the subject, the plan, and the execution are equally important. The first was published

* The current of thought in Italy has set on history so strongly that it has furnished the King of Sardinia with an opportunity for one of those acts by which a despot not wanting *in finesse* always seeks to swell the number of his panegyrists, and to create a sort of popularity for himself among the lettered tribe. By a decree of the 20th April 1833, Charles Albert constituted a commission for the purpose of collecting the rare or unpublished records of his kingdom. The first volume of their labours appeared at Turin in 1836, under the title of *Historiæ Patriæ Monumenta*. It is a folio of nearly 1900 pages, and contains 1050 documents, most of them never before published, and going back to the time of the Lombards: 195 are anterior to the 11th century. The importance of this collection is inconceivable, and I recommend it to the Directors of the British Museum.

at Turin in 1834 by Pomba, from the pen of Jerome Serra (who died in May of this year), the same who was called by Lord W. Bentinck in 1814 to preside over the provisional government of Genoa, and who energetically protested against the arbitrary act which united that city to Piedmont. He embraces, in four volumes, the history of ancient Liguria and of Genoa, finishing with the year 1483, the period at which the annals of Casoni commence; the time also when, from the loss of her eastern colonies, and from her intestine disorders reaching their extreme height, the decay of the republic commenced. But her political development was not arrested, and it is to be regretted that the author did not think fit to extend his work at least to the changes in the year 1528. It is a good and impartial performance. Five essays, placed at the end not to break the narrative by too many details, yield some very interesting data on the navigation and commerce of Genoa, the bank of St. George, the state of education, and the population of Genoa during the 14th and 15th centuries. The motto which Serra has chosen for his history, a quotation from Polybius, characterises its tendency: "There will be no man whom either the arms or the great number of the enemy can deter from the defence of his country and the common territory, when he shall see before his eyes the noble deeds of his ancestors." The praise of Genoa is perhaps too exclusively his theme, and he sometimes slightly veils the faults of his particular city

at the expense of that national feeling which should at present be the leading feature of the historical labours of the Italian patriot. The *History of the Republic of Genoa,* by Charles Varese, of which a part was published at Genoa in 1835 by Gravier, to be extended to eight volumes, is less chargeable with this defect; its tendency is more decided, and the views far more Italian. It is also more complete, as it proceeds from the origin of the republic—that is, from the 11th century, when Genoa emancipated herself from the power of the empire, and first named her own councils—up to the year 1814. The style is quite equal to that of the former work; but the book is disfigured by other defects; and the greatest, the most fatal of all, arises, in my opinion, from the spirit of the system which it follows—a system of which the most perfect specimen may be found in the histories of Botta (who died at Paris on the 10th of August last), the chief of a school which the Italians should, by all means in their power, oppose.

From his profound knowledge of the language; from his style, which so often reminds us of Tacitus; from his power of reasoning, his conciseness, and the rough energy of his delineations; from an independence, real on some points and affected on others; from his stormy career and his indigence; and lastly, from a mind imbued with feelings eminently Italian on whatever concerns the Italy of the past as contrasted with other nations, Botta is at this day in

possession of the suffrages of a large majority of his countrymen. His influence is felt throughout almost all the Italian publications on history of the present day. He is followed and imitated: under the difficulty of boldly opening a new route, his system has been adhered to as one having in reality the most of tradition, the most of conformity to ancient Italian habits. I say *system*, though I am perfectly aware that the characteristic of his school is precisely a pretended absence of system, a repudiation of all systems whatsoever, and the assertion that all fixed general views falsify history. In all this there is either bad faith or a strange hallucination. Every thing on earth is obedient to a system; for all that is, exists and progresses according to a fixed law. There is not only succession but continuity in the things of this world. Humanity, unless we rank it below vegetation, in a class anomalous to the rest of the universe, must have a law of progression and obey it. History is but the realisation of this progression; the historian is its expounder. The distinction between the *scribitur ad narrandum* and the *scribitur ad probandum* does not really exist. Whether he be conscious of it or not, the narrator must think, believe, and prove something: the only difference is that there exist two systems, two different modes, in which the law of development may be understood. With some, the law is one of continuous progress in one direction or another, but necessarily implying the belief in the all-powerfulness of education, for the human

race as for the individual. With others the law is of partial, successive, and circular development; in accordance with which every nation advances, retreats, rises, falls, undergoes a certain succession of phases, after which it loses its position for ever, or again goes through a similar round. Botta belongs to these last. When he launches forth against the modern fashion of writing history, as too systematic, his indignation against system must *not* be taken in too broad a sense; his thunder is meant for every system but his own. For himself, he has one so excellent, that men and things must bow to it. Destitute of philosophical power, having neither enlarged ideas in his mind nor strong faith in the teachings of history, Botta is fifty years behind his era. Botta is an aristocratic historian, loving his country by fits—that is to say, not the welfare, but the independence, the honour of his country. He is a Tory writer, for whom the people, organic principles, union, association, all those great ideas, the germination of this century, are a sealed book. The people, as the word is beginning to be understood, has no existence for him. The work of equalisation, of fusion, which has been accomplished in Italy by the people, has entirely escaped him; and in his continuation of Guicciardini, which came out since 1830, the people are scarcely seen. The theory of government which peeps out here and there in his writings is pitiable. His appreciation of things in-

dividual is that of Guicciardini and Machiavel, and leads directly to discouragement, scepticism, and misanthropy. But all this amounts to a doctrine of individualism; and certainly individualism is not the instrument with which to raise a fallen nation. Of that, however, he thinks but little; and very readily treats those who busy themselves about it as utopians and dreamers. He ably descants on existing diseases, impressing upon you at the same time that any attempt at a cure will but make them worse. He frequently exposes infamy, but from all his labour, from all his volumes, we gain only a single precept: "Draw thy cloak around thee, and be no partaker in this infamy;" as if to behold it trampling with insult on his country and his brothers, and to rest with his arms folded, were not to be accessory. From all these well-turned periods, these bursts of empty indignation, these vague aspirations towards an independence for which it is asserted there is no hope, there are no instruments, the youth of Italy can learn nothing but want of confidence, inaction, and premature decay; and Charles Albert was perhaps of the same opinion when he conferred on Botta the *order of merit.* The different governments of Italy, affecting meanwhile an air of much dissatisfaction, have allowed editions of his works to be multiplied and circulated with impunity.

This same system, moreover, too often pervades in its spirit, though not as to the whole of its inferences, works genuinely historical. It is seen in the

history of Varese, who, following the steps of Botta, seeks a place for aristocratic privilege* even in a republic, and overlooks all the evils of that deplorable struggle between the aristocracy and the people which is inevitable wherever the political organisation places the two elements together. It often pervades the noble performance of Litta, which sometimes betrays the corroding scepticism borrowed from Botta and Guicciardini, who affected to believe human nature incapable of realising the idea of social progression, and only accessible to the impulse of individualism and interest.† It even pervades another history which has made its appearance since 1830—the History of Naples from 1734 to 1825, by General Colletta. Exiled from Naples for his share in the events of 1820, and welcomed in Tuscany, where the government had not yet abandoned its habitual tolerance, Colletta began and completed in banishment his education for authorship. He studied language and style; he familiarised himself with the manner of the great historians; and the four volumes which were published after his death are an evidence

* "There is not any possible liberty in a state, be it even a republic, where aristocracy has not a proper place assigned to it as well as the people."—*Hist. of the Rep. of Genoa*, vol. ii. p. 61.

† "Gold and place are a rock ever fatal to the frailty of civilised men. By this tenet Guicciardini denied the possibility of social progress, and offended the pride, or rather the *charlatanerie*, of our generation; but experience has proved to us, after three centuries, that Guicciardini was not a short-sighted man, or at least I cannot persuade myself that he was so."—Litta *on Guicciardini*.

"Woe to man's renown if we would search into the secret causes of brilliant actions."—*Id. upon Philip Maria Visconti.*

of the progress he made, and of the energy of his determination. But the habits of the Napoleon school on the one hand, and the influence of Botta on the other, show their taint too often; the fear of exaggeration frequently betrays him into feebleness; a mania for maintaining at any cost a pretended impartiality, bordering on indifference, between the subject and the master, the oppressor and the oppressed, leads him to a faulty appreciation of things, and to that cold and affected gravity, springing from the head and not from the heart, so often visible in the works of Botta and his school. His history is a fine *morceau*, but incomplete. To depict the times which are the subject of Colletta's book, there would be required the strong feeling and the energetic and masculine conscience of Foscolo.

The summing-up at the conclusion of this history, which I give here, will amply mark its tendency, its spirit, and its aim. There may be easily observed also those narrow and limited views and that local egotism which pervades this work, even to the extent of sacrificing a national to a Neapolitan feeling:—

"I will therefore reckon up in one page (the last of these ten books) the honourable deeds, elsewhere separately mentioned, of that nation which, of all Italy, has alone preserved the seed of the long-hoped-for political amelioration.

"Neapolitan decrees were the first in Italy to vindicate liberty from the tyranny of the Church,

and to curb the priesthood. The authority for these laws came from the King, Charles Bourbon, the counsels of the minister Tanucci, and the power of the people. This spirit was further carried out under King Ferdinand. The palfrey, the presents, the tributes, all the infamous badges of the vassalage of our superstitious ancestors, were abolished by us.

"The liberal principles of the government which sprang up in France in the year 1789 were welcomed and promulgated in Naples earlier than elsewhere. What numbers there suffered death, or languished in long imprisonment, I have related in the third book of this history. At this same time the people obeyed the laws, enriched the treasury, swelled the ranks of the army, and added new glories to the Neapolitan flag, in the war in Lombardy and at sea. Yet we learn that while a merciless government trampled on one part of its subjects, from the other it met with obedience and support.

"An ill-omened and ill-timed war overturned the state; the army bore the punishment of the faults of its chiefs; the people found a remedy, and carrying on the war in their own fashion, rendered the conquest brief and disastrous. The irregular warfare of the peasantry against the disciplined troops in the Abruzzi, which was adopted on a larger scale in the succeeding year in Calabria, and which has been since imitated in Spain and Germany, is horrible when employed to enslave, but glorious when fighting in a good cause.

"This system was in 1799 ineffectual against the French, who conquered the Neapolitan people, and decreed a republic. The greater part of the nation took up arms to uphold the institutions of their country, and only a very small band defended liberty. They fought for opposite ends, the one party upholders of their civil rights, the other of their own political opinions, which are the rights of every people; one of the two parties erred, but on both sides the cause was just, the war honourable. The followers of liberty were overpowered: how much and what blood was shed is known to the world.

"Then came the French kingdoms. Such civil liberties as were possible under a government like that of the Empire were demanded by the Neapolitans, and obtained. The Neapolitan arms won their share of glory during those ten years in Germany, in Russia, in Italy, in Spain.

"In 1813, but for a few circumstances, Italy would have been united; the fates impeded the union, but the Neapolitans attempted it by negotiations and arms. In the following year, though allied with Austria, they extended the Italian empire in Italy, and scattered the seeds of independence and of union.

"In the following year, with the banner of liberty unfurled, the Neapolitan army overran Italy, inviting her to throw off the yoke of foreigners, and to be free and one. A rash enterprise for a single people; rational and prosperous, if the other provinces had

felt the same thirst for liberty. The Parmesans, the Modenese, the Tuscans, united themselves to the Austrians; the other provinces remained the spiritless servants of Austria, and the Neapolitans paid for their rashness with their blood.

"At the restoration of the old governments, in the year 1815, Naples alone in Italy preserved the code, the laws, the institutions of the French; not that the antiquated King Ferdinand of Bourbon had any inclination for the better government of the state, but because he feared the indignation of the people. Yet these institutions were not on a par with Neapolitan civilisation, and in 1820 the people, by an illustrious revolution, made for themselves better laws. Deceived and betrayed, they could not defend them; their fall was inevitable, but it was a crime to fall basely.

"Of this crime they suffered the penalty, and tyranny succeeded to a state of too great liberty; but the deaths and innumerable martyrdoms were insufficient to tame them; Naples is a slave biting his chain and making those tremble who trample on him.

"Thus within thirty years a hundred thousand Neapolitans perished by various deaths, all for the cause of liberty or the love of Italy; and the other Italian nations, unscathed and at ease, submissive to a foreign power, silent or applauding, outrage the misery of the vanquished; under these unjust and cowardly calumnies, their continued servitude is de-

creed, till some other arm, as it were in spite of themselves, can raise them from their degradation. An unhappy presage which I would may be false, but which follows from the facts I have related, as will be manifest to posterity, who, I trust, acquiring from our vices the opposite virtues, will concede to the Neapolitan people (wretched but active, restless, but in search of improvement) some breathings of pity, and some praise—a barren meed which their contemporaries deny them."

This want of distinct tendency excepted, the works of history which Italy has produced in this short space deserve every praise. And certainly, if to the histories of Serra, Varese, Botta, Colletta, and the others I have quoted, there be added a mass of works of a secondary rank, together with the numerous reprints of the ancient historians of Italy, the collections, among which should be remarked that of Leghorn by Masi, aided by the erudition and zeal of Antonio Benci, the translations, etc. etc., we must admit that Italian intellect has not been inactive in this branch of study since 1830.

Philosophy has not proceeded with the same activity: and to this must be attributed that want of tendency I have just pointed out; for historical truth can be seen and reached only from the elevation of a sound philosophical creed. That philosophical studies are, however, still behindhand in Italy, we need no other proof than the exaggerated reputation

there accorded to men possessed, no doubt, of intelligence and much learning, but nothing beyond; such as Galuppi, Rosmini, and even Romagnosi, as far as regards his general views on the philosophy of history. I have not here the necessary space for an examination of these writers, and of the state of philosophy in Italy; but I may say that the Italian mind is not yet sufficiently emancipated from the influence of the French authors of the 18th century. The metaphysics of the Voltairian school, the philosophy of the senses, more or less disguised, still reigns triumphant, either in principle or method. Often, indeed, its fundamental principle, which it has in common with other and better schools, is repudiated; but its practical applications and deductions, its exclusive spirit of analysis, its habit of looking at fractions and not at wholes, its basis of individualism, its tendency to scepticism, its arrogance, its sneers—all these are preserved. Romagnosi will decide, *ex cathedrâ*, on the philosophy of Hegel, or every other German, by the first two pages of a French abstract of it which might fall into his hands;* he will lay down as the basis of the penal

* See vol. ix. of his works. Florence, 1834. *Alcuni pensieri sopra un ultra metafisica Filosofia della Storia.* The French abstract is from Lerminier's *Introduction à l'Histoire du droit;* and after the perusal of a short page, Romagnosi thinks himself entitled to pass sentence, to mock, to laugh at the whole historical system of Hegel. Now, I am no Hegelian, and think his system false in many parts of its foundation, but I deem not Hegel's mind a mind to be treated with scorn, nor that an historical philosophy, both rich and luminous in many respects, can be judged save by those who have passionlessly and deeply studied it. Hegel has undoubtedly a vast, subtle, and logical mind; and his attempt to blend together the criticism of Kant, the idealism of Fichte, and the

portion of his *social* theory the hypothesis of the *individual* in a savage state;* an intrepid reformer as to details, he will yet never get beyond the reasoning which sees in legislation a mere instrument of defence, in which the cultivation of moral principles is no part of the end in view;† without a thought of Louisiana, Auburn, or Philadelphia, he will boldly launch his defiance to the favourers of a penitentiary system, to bring forth a single scheme for a practical code;‡ he

naturalism of Schelling, at least shows a just conception of the unity of science, which is entitled to acknowledgment. It appears to me that Romagnosi does not even understand the terminology of the system.

* See his *Genesi del Diritto Penale*, in the first chapters.

"If one could easily conceive human nature or man *by himself*—that is to say, without placing him in any peculiar state or society—such an abstraction could be suitable to my purpose, and give a better chance of discovering truth. But as this abstraction is extremely difficult to most readers, I must content myself with contemplating man in the state of savage nature, as the condition which approaches the most, and bears the greatest resemblance to, the abstraction I have spoken of." It is on this hypothesis that he builds all his penal system.

Now it is an error—common, perhaps, but not the less an error, and a decisive one—to look for the foundation of a theory of rights, and more than that, of social duties, in a state which is the negation of society, in which there cannot possibly exist such a thing as right, but only individual necessity: to look for the principles that must govern the fulfilment of a duty (as that of correcting the guilty) in a state supposed to be antecedent to the acknowledgment of that duty.

† "The right of punishment is an habitual right of self-defence against the permanent menace rising from an innate intemperance."—*Genesi*, etc.

‡ See his writings on De Simoni's book, *Dei delitti*, where he speaks of the school of Lucas, Livingston, etc. "We may defy," says he, "all the apostles of the penitentiary system, not only to present a good scheme of a penal code, but to establish any punishment whatever upon a rule rejecting arbitrary discretion, and capable of being a guide to a magistrate.

"How could we give admittance to an opinion which abandons all civil justice and wisdom to arbitrary power? How could we, with the

talks of the human race, but not only does he disbelieve in indefinite progress, he even denies the possibility of all nations attaining what is attainable by some;* his philosophical principles resemble those of

ideas of personal atonement, amendment, and reformation, avoid the either extinct or obsolete barbarisms of European tribunals, and the doctrines of monastic inquisitions?"

* "An indefinite progress is a vain chimera, because human nature itself is limited" (does he not here mistake *indefinite* for *infinite?*) "Our organisation, and *soil, climate, stimulus—all demonstrate* it is inclined by itself to quietness" (I think the contrary is true). "Methinks rather that the condition of the world suggests the great problem, whether the nations will *ever* be able to attain that *finite* apex to which the mind of the philosopher may soar, and whether it will be given to all of them to approach equally that point. Decay may intrude at every stage, as is attested by history."—*Dell' indole e dei fattori dell' incivilimento.*

"How then may man in general, or the human species, be defined? . . . . Man is an animal capable, from his nature and in the society of his fellow-creatures, of becoming rational and moral, and, if aided by tradition and in a certain physical position, of preserving his condition and gradually improving his life."—*Della definizione dell' uomo;* a pamphlet. 1832. Milan.

"An historical picture intended to present the natural march of mankind admits as granted that the different races of the earth may, by a universal law of nature and driven by their own impulse, proceed sooner or later by themselves, and everywhere verifying the conditions of cultivated and satisfactory intercourse. But I have not been able to find any principle, based either on facts or on reason, available to justify such a supposition. I think it must be held rather as a charitable wish than as a reasonable persuasion."—*Dell' indole,* etc.

"Civilisation has been and is a wholly special, wholly traditional, wholly industrial art, which had its origin in a point of the globe, was propagated not otherwise than alphabetical writing, in certain practicable modes, in certain climates, in certain countries, and which may succeed differently with different physical and moral peculiarities of nations."—*Idem.*

"*Perfectibility* is nothing but a capacity, a susceptibility, existing in different degrees in the very constitution of human nature."—*Id.*

"*Perfectibility* may be compared to the vegetative power of the earth left to itself."—*Id.*

Hobbes, his mode of inquiry is that of Bonnet of Geneva. We are indebted to him for an able summary of all the thoughts, all the discussions of the 18th century; he gave a great impulse, an impulse thoroughly Italian and national, to historical studies, but he struck out no new route; he was the founder of no school whatever, least of all a school for futurity. Italian philosophy has not, however, advanced beyond, but stands motionless in adoration before him; the influence which he exercises on youth, once so valuable, is growing as dangerous as that of Botta. Italy must enlarge her sphere of observation; she must profoundly study every philosophical manifestation of the age; strengthened by the study of minds which have exhibited a power of generalisation to which she has been hitherto a stranger, she must then rise to her own great school of the Brunos, the Telesios, and the Campanellas. There she will find the germs of a

"Civilisation . . . . is but a human *industrial* process, productive of improved and satisfactory intercourse."—*Id.*

"And, indeed, the establishment of a government is a good as far as it is a necessary remedy for an evil, such as the ignorance, etc., of the different individuals."—*Id.*

I could continue such quotations without end. Now, is a man who can see in general institutions nothing but mere self-*defence* and by no means social education—who can see in humanity but the individual, and in the progressive development of nations nothing necessary and inherent to human nature—whose barren system involves a pre-ordained inequality of races and nations—whose political system does not go beyond a negative idea, denying to the government (which, wherever duly constituted, should be the intelligence of the nation brought to a focus), every *initiative* of social progress, and considering it only as an instrument of defence—is he the man called to regenerate a fallen nation? Is he not overrated, when he is hailed as the founder of a new school, and restorer of Italian philosophy?

fraternisation of religion and philosophy, and of those institutions for her so indispensable.

Of such a tendency there are already some symptoms; nor must it be forgotten that this call for union, for harmony, has sprung from the midst of an immense political association, that of YOUNG ITALY, the first in that country which has united in its plan, conception, and action, a material, an intellectual, and a moral emancipation. The works of Pasquale Galuppi, of Tropea, in the kingdom of Naples; those of Baldassare Poli on Tennemann, and other subjects; the essays inserted from time to time in the periodicals by some young writers; the important publications of Vico, of which there is an excellent and complete edition, arranged and illustrated by Joseph Ferrari, at Milan—are further signs of renovation; for all these works, whether they belong to the doctrines of eclecticism, or exhibit the spirit of a more advanced philosophy, at least imply a *movement*, and offer their protest against the superficial philosophy of the 18th century. But as yet no one has given the formula of a philosophy which will supply this triple want. Mammiani's book on the *Regeneration of the Ancient Italian Philosophy*, published in 1835—a work possessing merit in many respects, but of which the importance has been exaggerated by some—goes no further than a mere indication of a system, and this system is based on individualism. The natural history of the individual is the highest aim of his philosophy. He has no idea of a social philosophy,

none of human nature, none of the general law by which it is governed.

The blank existing in philosophy naturally produces a similar blank in literary criticism, for criticism is the philosophy of literature. All here is truly a void. If we except a little work, by Balbo, on the *Literature of the First Eleven Centuries of the Christian Era*, published at Turin in 1836, and altogether based on the erroneous principle which divides into two epochs the history of Art, pretending that the first was governed by a law of periodical change, whilst the second manifests a law of continuous progression; —if we except a few articles in the literary journals, criticism is dumb. There have been some good translations of the best foreign authors; but the sense and spirit of the original have been too often sacrificed to conventionalities of manner, as is the case even in the translations from Schiller by Maffei, in other respects so well rendered. Thus, without those lessons of lofty criticism which should accompany them, these translations of the great authors are either not understood, and consequently unappreciated, or, worse, they lead the young into blind imitation. There are at this day 180 periodicals, and save some well-written articles of the *juste milieu* school, by Ambrosoli, in the *Biblioteca di Milano*,* and the enlarged and fertile views developed by the pliant, indefatigable,

* A periodical governed by Austrian influence. As to its literary creed, "Our nation," it says, "has her literature and her fine arts teeming with excellent productions, and honoured by names that hold the first place in the world, as Dante, etc. . . . . Italy must then be contented with such a glorious band, worship the footsteps of those great

and instinctively just mind of Cesare Cantù, and others of his friends, in the *Indicatore* or the *Ricoglitore* of Milan, the rest present nothing of importance under the head of literary criticism. I know not if the *Subalpino* of Turin has fulfilled the promises held forth by its announcement. The academies, with that of La Crusca at their head, drag on a miserable existence, without life, without union, without any results on the intellectual progress of the nation. They have been left behind in slavery.*

men, and tread on the path they have traced out, without looking for any new ones."—See the number for *July* 1835.

* An exception must, however, be made in favour of the academy of Turin, which, though unable to free itself from the inconveniences proceeding from royal patronage, now and then directs research to important and fertile topics. Thus, a short time since, the members proposed to a *concours* the following question:—*What is the origin of the Italian* MUNICIPII? Afterwards, perceiving that the subject so bluntly entered on was too thorny to be boldly handled, they *turned* the difficulty and proposed another question,—to point out the historical phases of landed *property* in Italy,—which comes to the same thing. The question has been treated and the prize won by MM. Vesme and Fossati, in a work published in 1836 at Turin—(*Vicende della proprietà in Italia*, etc.) The work is important on many accounts, but it is based on a wrong system. The two authors, one of whom is a member of the historical commission instituted by Charles Albert, trace the history of property from the fall of the Roman empire to the establishment of the fiefs; they distinguish three principal periods,—the first ascending to the Gothic dominion; the second embracing that of the Lombards; the third extending from Charlemagne to the Othos. As to the first and the third, they are unquestionably right: in the first period property and *municipia* descend wholly from the Roman institutions; the supremacy of the national element in both is equally evident in the third period. The question is weighty and entangled as to the second period, the epoch to which is assigned the origin of the Italian *municipii*, or city-communities. The above authors admit during this time the total disappearance of every Roman influence, and the omnipotence of the German element on the constitution of property in Italy. This is the system opposed by Savigny, but upheld with great talent, learning, and zeal—which, however, is very easily accounted for—by many other German authors, and lately by the historian Leo, whose work, *On the*

There is another circumstance which may console us for this dreary blank, and augurs more than the academies could ever accomplish. I refer to that extraordinary impulse pervading the entire peninsula which incites so great a mass of intelligence towards the education of the poor and of children. These symptoms are, in truth, the precursors of Democracy. I cannot here detail how much has been accomplished. The subject merits an article to itself. Such an inquiry must not be confined to the limits of the press, but must embrace all the institutions of voluntary charity founded for this object; for all these are but manifestations of the same spirit. It must survey all such manifestations: the elementary schools of agriculture, the infant schools, the somewhat extravagant attempts which have been for some time made to popularise the language by tales, selections in prose and verse, and other continually multiplying publications for children; it must bring out into view the *maternal* principle, a principle altogether popular, and teeming with incalculable results, now common to all

Constitution of the Lombard Cities, has been translated in 1836, at Turin by the Count C. Balbo. Now, I believe this system historically, philologically, and philosophically wrong. Besides, the question is exceedingly important, and deserves from the Italians a profound and persevering attention to make it as clear as possible. The definition and future prospects of Italian nationality are wholly there. The life of the Italian people begins at the institution of the *communes;* and the question, whether the element which had in this phenomenon its first manifestation is Italian or Teutonic, national or imported, cannot be an idle one to those who study the future destinies of the peninsula. The school of Manzoni is *Italian* in this—and I feel grateful to M. Cantù for the opposition he has constantly and skilfully maintained, in the *Ricoglitore* and elsewhere, to the *German* system.

the true patriotism of Italy. The Italian women in Tuscany, and especially in Lombardy, participate warmly in this *movement.* They have responded worthily to the appeal addressed to them by a man whose life is one pure and indefatigable train of well-doing to the poor and the children of the poor—Raphael Lambruschini—an ecclesiastic, whose name I pronounce with emotion and gratitude. This gentleman is the editor of a monthly journal entitled the *Educator of the Poor*, published in Tuscany, and of which the first number was welcomed by 1100 subscribers, figures of happy significance for Italy.

I cannot abstain from quoting an extract from the writings of this pious man, in which his whole soul is visible:—

. . . . "He amongst you who is willing to spare one penny a day will save a child. If, of a hundred persons who each day lay out a penny in works of charity, we can find only twenty who will consent to employ their pence in sending a poor child to the Infant School, all the poor children of Tuscany will be received into these charitable asylums—every poor family will be benefited. A thousandth part of the money spent for guilty purposes, or swallowed up in the work of corruption, will suffice to rear a new generation, intelligent, industrious, and moral. These reflections are, I confess, a burden to the soul; they drive me into unquiet and distracting thoughts; they would almost render me an enemy to mankind, did I

not think that the cause of such indifference to the welfare of a class so interesting to humanity was not altogether hardness of heart, but thoughtlessness and self-absorption. In natural history we hear of an aggregation of parts without organs, without a common centre, without life; and this is called a *juxta-position.* Here, I grieve to say it, here is a picture of modern society—so at least it has been to the present day. I hope it will cease to be thus. . . Association is the only remedy against that tempest of popular poverty and popular power which is already howling and will soon burst on our heads. Let us associate, not to combat the people, but to relieve them, to regenerate them, to make friends of them."

Another periodical of the same kind has appeared at Venice under the title of *l'Istitutore Elementare;* another called the *Letture Popolari,* a penny weekly journal, is published at Turin, and a fourth, the *Giornale pei fanciulli,* has come out since 1833 at Placencia. The followers of Manzoni have, to their credit, distinguished themselves in these efforts. Samuel Biava has written some admirable songs for the people: we need only refer to his *Leggenda del fanciullo Savoiardo,* very recently published. Cantù, the brothers Sacchi, Michel Parma, and others at Milan; Henry Mayer and others in Tuscany; Joseph Godemo at Venice; Fapanni at Treviso, and a hundred names more, deserve mention in this respect.

The symptoms I have described in this rapid and necessarily incomplete sketch may seem of no great

importance to those who fancy Italy enjoying, like this country, the uncontrolled development of her powers. But if we take into consideration the sad reality pressing upon her, the persecution called forth by the slightest imprudent ebullition of feeling, the suspicion attaching to every effort of intellect betraying a desire for activity; when we recollect that of ten men of great zeal and abilities five are sure to find imprisonment or exile at the very commencement of their career, we are compelled to give a double and triple value to efforts otherwise mediocre. Every dissertation on the intellectual movement in Italy should have, for a commentary, the list of her proscribed. The works completed in the very throes of her misery, and of the persecutions endured by her sons, both at home and abroad, are sufficient of themselves to do honour to the country which produces them, and to bear witness to Italian intellect and exertion. Guglielmo Libri, an exile, one of the first mathematicians of the day, and admitted a member of the Parisian Institute, by his History of Mathematical and Physical Science in Italy has filled a blank which carelessness and ingratitude had permitted to exist to the present day. Another exile, Orioli, now a professor at Corfù, labours, with acknowledged success, to deduce the origin of Italian civilisation from the Etruscan antiquities. An exile, Berchet, is the man who, after being the first in Italy to hoist the signal of the *mouvement romantique*, has led the way in lyrical national poetry, and will, I trust, open yet newer routes

in the volume announced as ready for publication. These too are exiles—Giannone, the author of *The Exile*, a work well known amongst us,—Angeloni, known by various political works, of which I admire not all the ideas and much less the style, whilst I appreciate the exemplary constancy of the veteran patriot, and his enthusiasm for the cause of the people, —Rossetti, Pistrucci, who have exalted by their patriotism the too often futile and degraded talent of improvisation. Exiles also are they who first raised in a foreign country the standard, religious and social, of Young Italy; exiles they who attempted the literary and theoretical application of the same principle in a journal called *The Italian*, of which some numbers appeared in Paris last year, and which has unfortunately been obliged to discontinue its publication. Others seek to advance the intelligence of Italy on the path of philosophical inquiry, either by translations from German philosophers or by works calculated to restore to favour the Italian school of the 16th century; others, Ugoni, Tommaseo, etc., distinguish themselves by works of history or of literary criticism. The best translation of Faust is by an exile (Scalvini); and to Bianchi Giovini—also an exile, if I mistake not—we are indebted for the only good and complete Life of Paolo Sarpi.

Thus the intelligence of Italy holds its course amidst exile and imprisonment. Against all the obstacles accumulated by terror, corruption, a servile education, and prejudices,—most inveterate, I am

bound to admit, among the *literati*—the youth of Italy insensibly advance towards a school of regeneration, which they will unhesitatingly enter as soon as they are emancipated from the influence—useful in its day, but now injurious—of Manzoni in literature, Botta in history, and Romagnosi in the philosophy of literature and law.

FROM AN ARTICLE ON PAOLO SARPI.

(Reprinted from the *Westminster Review*, 1838.)

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THERE are in Sarpi two distinct beings, either of them so illustrious that the other might be suppressed without depriving him of immortality.

Sarpi possessed indeed an encyclopædic intellect. There exists not a single study then cultivated in which he was not more than initiated; not a single branch of human knowledge in which he has not left the trace of his steps. He rose at break of day, and worked eight, ten, sometimes twelve hours; but his memory must have been astonishing, and his faculty of taking up and assimilating the ideas furnished by his studies prodigiously active, to enable him to attain, even with this assiduity, the point he incontest-

ably did attain in so many sciences at once. Unfortunately the direct data for fixing this point with precision are in great part wanting. A kind of fatality has wreaked its fury on the labours of this wonderful man. One-half of them are irreparably lost, and a great part of the remainder moulder, unpublished, in various foreign libraries. His own indifference to fame, and the carelessness of his contemporaries, have deprived us of a mass of writings which, if collected, would have formed a sort of encyclopædia of the 17th century; the conflagration of the Servite library has done the rest. A large portion of his correspondence with the first men of his time, and the whole of that with Galileo, is lost: his treatise on Equations is lost; his treatise on the Motions of Fluids is lost; his book of Observations on the Magnetic Power is lost; his additions, explanations, and commentaries on the mathematician Vieta; his fragments on the works of Aristotle, Plato, and other Greek philosophers; his researches on Anatomy and Optics; his precious collection of 200 octavo pages containing 600 or 700 thoughts on different topics of science and philosophy, all are lost. Nothing remains to us, of all these works, but what happens to have been extracted by Foscarini in his history of Venetian literature, and by Grisellini in his *Memorie Aneddotiche*, both always epitomising and hardly ever quoting; both writers too inferior to their subject for us to have full confidence in their abridgments. But all these losses regard

ourselves rather than Sarpi. The judgment which posterity must pass on him remains equally certain, and the "*intelligentia per cuncta permeans*" (the words of the inscription composed by Andrea Veniero for a bust of which the mean resentment of Urban VIII. and the poltroonery of the Venetian Senate prevented the erection) is not the less sanctioned by what remains. The traces left by his researches are everywhere, and the depth of those researches is attested to us by witnesses the most unimpeachable. Thus, speaking on magnetic phenomena, Battista Porta tells us: "Venetiis eodem studio vigilantem cognovimus Paulum Venetum. . . quo aliqua didicisse non solùm fateri non erubescimus sed gloriamur, quum eo doctiorem, subtiliorem, quotquot adhuc videre contigerit neminem cognoverimus; natum ad Encyclopediam: non tantum Venetæ urbis aut Italiæ, sed orbis splendor et ornamentum."* In Optics, the famous Acquapendente avows how much he is indebted to Fra Paolo—"Theologo, philosophoque insigni, sed mathematicarum disciplinarum et præcipue optices maxime studioso."† Sir Henry Wotton exhibits him far advanced in Botany and Mineralogy. Galileo calls him his father and master, and declares that no one in Europe surpassed him in mathematical knowledge. Tradition attributes to him the design of the anatomical theatre at Padua and other edifices. Sarpi himself shows us that he was consummately learned

* *De Magia Naturali*, lib. vii.

† *De Oculo et Visûs Organo*, p. 3, cap. vi.

in astronomy, in mechanics, and anatomy—*vir ad miraculum doctus**—in the different collections of his letters,† and particularly in the fifty-two Latin letters written to Leschassier, from 1608 to 1613. No advance in science escaped him; no discovery was made that he did not comment on, almost always to its improvement. Whether we look to his own letters, to his memoirs by Grisellini and Foscarini, or to the not sufficiently cited writings of his contemporaries—Sarpi, "this poor monk"—to quote the words of his biographer‡ (chap. iv.)—

"Brought up in the prejudices of the cloister, and impelled in his philosophic career solely by his all-powerful genius, at a time when philosophy in Italy was in the saddest of all possible conditions—when the inexorable and destroying tyranny of the Spaniard debased the intellects of Italy, the court of Rome held them in suspicion, and the Inquisition persecuted them—when every opinion, every discovery, every book, raised the alarm of a new heresy, and had to pass the ordeal of a censorship in the hands of

* Words written on the portrait of him still existing in the library of St. Mark at Venice.

† Besides the letters to Leschassier, we have those of the edition of Capolago, before mentioned; nineteen (in Latin) written to Gillot, from 1608 to 1617; two to Cassaubon; eleven to Priuli, of 1609; the letters in the Geneva edition, from 1607 to 1618; those to Monsignor Lollino, bishop of Belluno, inserted in Cicogna's *Iscrizioni Veneziane;* and some others dispersed. Several unpublished are to be found in a manuscript existing in the Brera Library. A complete edition is a desideratum.

‡ Biografia di Fra Paolo Sarpi. By A. Bianchi-Giovini, 2 vols. Zürich, Orell, Füssli, et Cic. 1836.

monkish idiots, who understood them not, and reported them as impious,—when no one could be a philosopher without being adjudged an atheist or a magician,—when a monk-philosopher, though at Venice the government was less superstitious than elsewhere, had still more to dread than any other,"—this poor monk we behold among the first to apply analysis and experiment to the phenomena of nature —advancing at even pace with Gilbert in his observations on the magnetic phenomena—perfecting the mathematical labours of Vieta, and correcting the errors of Anderson—giving probably to Santorio the first notions on the laws of animal statics, and of the action of the air on the fluids circulating in the vessels of animated bodies—throwing out hypotheses, since verified, on the spots in the moon, which he considered as irregularities of the surface, and laying down before Hevelius maps of those irregularities—assisting Galileo in the construction of the telescope, his penetrating eye foreseeing at the same time the persecutions which his friend would have to undergo, and the way in which theology would be arrayed in opposition to his confirmation of the Copernican theory—attempting an explanation, by one universal law, of all the phenomena of celestial motion, and hazarding, before Newton, a solution of the gravitation of bodies, by his notion that the earth is an immense loadstone, having the property of attracting the bodies surrounding it—anticipating Barrow in attention to the difficulties of determining the places of objects seen by

refraction; Cavalieri on the subject of burning glasses whose curve is generated by a parabola; Kepler and Gregory in their ideas of comparative astronomy—and crowning all by two great discoveries, the first of which, that of the contraction and dilatation of the foramen uveæ, is proved to be his by Acquapendente;* and the second that of the circulation of the blood, which, notwithstanding all that has been said by Morgagni, and so many others after him, among whom I am obliged to name Ginguenè,† must, I think, incontestably be attributed to him.

In saying this, I am aware that I touch a point in which it may be thought that the national honour of England is concerned. But truth in everything and above everything appears to me the only basis for a nation's honour. I am far from seeking to lessen in the slightest degree that share of immortality which all Europe has decreed to Harvey, although love of truth compels me to repudiate the assertion put forth by one of his disciples, that Sarpi received a copy of Harvey's book from the Venetian ambassador resident in London; an assertion disproved by facts (for Sarpi died in 1623, five years before the appearance of the work *Exercitatio Anatomica de motu Cordis et Sanguinis in Animalibus*, which was published by Fischer at Frankfort in 1628). It

* "Quod arcanum, nempe de variâ contractione et dilatatione foraminis uveæ, observatum est et mihi significatum a R. P. magistro Paulo Veneto, ordinis Servorum."—*De Oculo et visûs organo.*

† *Hist. Litter. d'Italie*, ch. xxviii. He seems, however, to contradict himself in the same chapter, some pages further on.

seems probable, as has often happened, that neither of these great men was in any way indebted to the discoveries of the other; and the merit remains exclusively with Harvey of rendering the discovery available to science by tracing it to its consequences, which Acquapendente had not even a glimpse of. But the claims of Sarpi to the discovery itself appear to me so strong that I must be permitted a short digression in their favour: the rather, that Sarpi's biographer, Bianchi-Giovini, so minute on most other points, appears to have treated this a little too cursorily.

The discovery of the circulation of the blood must be discussed as between Sarpi and Acquapendente; the solution depends on ascertaining to which of these two belongs the discovery of the valves of the veins. Between these two, I say, lies the question of priority; for were we to admit that Acquapendente was the first to discover these valves, the question would be entirely set at rest; Harvey would be, beyond all cavil, the sole person admissible to the honour of the full discovery, since Acquapendente, notwithstanding his knowledge of the structure of the veins, did not hint a single doubt on the Galenic theory of the spirit circulating through the arteries. But if the priority be given to Sarpi, the field is left open to those who may be desirous of ascertaining how far he pushed his researches. I have expressed my own opinion on the subject, which it appears to me is capable of historical proof.

There is, first, a most essential evidence in favour of Sarpi—the positive testimony of Fra Fulgenzio, who appeals from his own knowledge to that of men eminent in the science, and, among the rest, of Santorio and Asselinau. They were both living when he wrote, and it is difficult to suppose that he would incur the hazard of contradiction from them, and expose his labours in honour of his friend to irreparable discredit. There is also the evidence of Claude Peiresc (see his life by Gassendi*)—evidence the more important as he was the friend of Acquapendente, and resided in Italy, almost entirely either at Venice or at Padua, from 1599 to 1602—the very period during which the latter published (1600) his treatise *De Ostiolis Venarum.* A third testimony, still more important, is that of Wesling, as found in the twenty-sixth letter of Bartolinus to Waley. His words are decisive: "De circulatione Harveianâ mihi *secretum* âperuit Veslingius nulli revelandum, esse nempe inventum Petri Pauli Veneti (â quo de ostiolis venarum habuit Acquapendens) ut *ex ipsius autographo* vidit quod Venetiis servat P. Fulgentius illius discipulus et successor." Bartolini, whose weighty authority has been neglected by M. Bianchi-Giovini, was so certain on the point that he frequently reverts to it in his *Anatomia Reformata.* In lib. i. De

* "Cum simul monuissem Gulielmum Harveium edidisse præclarum librum de successione sanguinis, etc. . . . . inter cætera verò argumenta confirmasse illud ex venarum valvulis, de quibus ipse (Peireschius) aliquid *inaudierat* ab Acquapendente, et quarum *inventorem primum* Sarpium Servitam meminerat." Compare this passage of Gassendi with the remarks of Foscarini, in his *Letteratura Veneziana*, note, 249. See also Grisellini, *Memorie Aneddote*, p. 1.

Venis, he says: "Cujus quamquam apud antiquos obscura extant vestigia, tamen clarius nostro seculo innotuit ingeniosissimo Paulo Sarpi Veneto, ut ex schedis ejus P. Fulgentius retulit, mox Harveio Anglo, cui primæ *promulgationis* et per varia argumenta et experimenta *probationis* primæ laus merito debetur;" a passage which appears to me to be an admirable statement of the question, from the impartiality with which the share of merit is assigned to each: and he again repeats nearly the same meaning in his second chapter, "De Venarum substantia et valvulis." Now, Bartolini lived at a period when the question had not yet been darkened by time nor confused by controversy. The first edition of his works, printed at Leyden, bears the date of 1641. Harvey was then alive, and lived till the year 1657. Bartolini had every possible opportunity of rectifying his statement had it not been well grounded. He was travelling in Italy from 1542 to 1645; was received a member of the *Academia degli Incogniti* at Venice; and was resident a considerable period at Padua, where the memory of Acquapendente, who died in 1619, was still fresh. With the impartiality manifest in all that he says, would he have persisted in these assertions whilst Harvey was still alive? But, more than this—Waley, himself a contemporary of Harvey and one of his principal partisans, confirms Bartolini's attestation. In his epistle to Bartolini, *De motu chyli et sanguinis*, he says, "Quo (seculo) vir incomparabilis Paulus Servita Venetus valvularum in venis fabricam observavit

accuratius quam magnus anatomicus Fabricius ab Acquapendente postea edidit, et ex valvularum constitutione aliisque experimentis sanguinis motum deduxit, egregio scripto asseruit, quod etiamnum intelligo apud Venetos asservari. Ab hoc Servitâ edoctus vir doctissimus Gulielmus Harveius sanguinis hunc motum accuratius indagavit, inventis auxit, probavit firmius et suo vulgavit nomine." When Waley wrote, Sarpi was dead; and his belief of the existence of the manuscript was founded not on vague reports current at Venice amongst Sarpi's friends, but on the surer authority of his own scientific information, and his correspondence with the learned. It does not appear that Waley ever travelled in Italy; we know that he received his doctor's degree in 1631, that the year following he taught at Leyden, and that his death took place there in 1649.

To all these testimonies, since acquiesced in by Haller and others (vide *Eloy. Dict. Histor. de la Médecine*—art. "Harvey"), Morgagni, the principal objector, opposes in his *Anatomical Letters* (Venice 1741) merely a few assertions totally at variance with facts; the authority of Baccino, a pupil of Aquapendente, who published in 1592, whose expressions,* moreover, are by no means decisive against the opinion I support, and some considerations of improbability, which would be valid did not the question relate to

* "Neminem *legimus* qui earum (valvularum) fecerit mentionem ante Fab. ab Acquapendente,"—"Valvulas . . . . Fab. ab Acquapendente anno 1574, *publice demonstravit.*"

a person of such extraordinary intellectual superiority as Paul Sarpi. An argument from the age of Sarpi (he was but twenty-two in 1574, when Acquapendente first mentioned the valves) might be of some weight in a case of absolute uncertainty, but is of none whatever against such evidence as I have quoted. It must not be forgotten that the intellectual development of Sarpi was marvellously precocious; and that his Mantuan theses, which procured him a pension, an office at court, a public lectureship, and caused it to be said of him that *there would be but one Fra Paolo*, are of as early a date as 1570, when he was but eighteen. The assertion that his serious studies commenced only in 1582, after he had been elected Provincial of his order, is an even more unfounded assumption. It was precisely during his four years' residence at Mantua that he was engaged in those studies which I (after M. Bianchi-Giovini) have detailed. We know that anatomy was one of them; we know also that in these four years he made great progress in hydrostatics and in all the branches of mathematics. Now, it was from these very sciences, from physico-mathematical speculations, that Sarpi came to surmise the impossibility of the blood flowing in the veins in a direction opposite to its own weight; thence his researches on the structure of the veins, hence the discovery of the valves, and all the rest—by an inductive process, I may add, far more scientifically correct than that of Acquapendente.

We have, besides, testimony almost direct to the point from Sarpi himself, in a fragment of a letter preserved to us by Grisellini and quoted by M. Bianchi-Giovini, in which he declares that he had found a great identity between his own thoughts and what Vesale had said of the circulation of the blood, and of the insufflation of the air into the lungs of persons in a state of asphyxia.

"As to your exhortations" (says Fra Paolo), "I must tell you that I am no longer in a position to be able, as heretofore, to relieve my hours of silence by making anatomical observations on lambs, kids, calves, or other animals; if I were, I should be now more than ever desirous of repeating some of them, on account of the noble present you have made me of the great and truly useful work of the illustrious Vesale. There is really a great analogy between the things already remarked and noted down by me (*avvertite e registrate*) respecting the motion of the blood in the animal body, and the structure and use of the valves, and what I have, with pleasure, found indicated, though with less clearness, in book vii. chap. 9, of this work. It may be gathered thence that by the insufflation of fresh air into the trachea of dying men, or of those in whom the vital functions appear to have ceased, we succeed in restoring to their blood the lost motion, and in prolonging life for some time. If this be so, which can no longer be doubted, after the assurance of this great anatomist, I am the more confirmed in the opinion that the air

we breathe contains a principle or agent capable of vivifying the sanguineous fluid, of re-establishing its motion in those who are overtaken by mortal faintings or overpowered by the pernicious vapours exhaled from tombs; . . . . an agent, in short, such as that indicated by scripture in the words *Anima omnis carnis*—that is to say, of everything living—*in sanguine est;* of which also spoke some ancient philosophers, and, nearer to our own time, Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, etc."

Let the passage of Vesale, in chapter xix. of the book *De Corporis humani fabricâ*, be attentively examined; mark the expression, "in arteriis sanguinem natura contineri;" and that in the tenth chapter—"cordis functiones quæ in *sanguinis emutatione* . . . . potissimum consistunt;" and it will be impossible that a comparison with the passage in Sarpi's letter should not prove that such ideas were not new to him—that he had already been engaged in similar experiments—that he had attained a greater degree of precision than Vesale himself, and that his silence respecting Acquapendente, at the very time when he is evincing his satisfaction at meeting with a confirmation of the ideas which he had written down some time before on the motion of the blood and the use of the valves, excludes the last-mentioned person from all claim to priority. Sarpi was not a man to suppress the discoveries of

others in order to appropriate them to himself. He was modest in the extreme, of a high sense of honour, and a very moderate degree of vanity. There is nothing surprising, nothing repugnant to his character (so essentially prudent, and with too little ambition in its composition for him to risk the calm of his life in favour of a scientific discovery), in supposing that, dreading the clamour of superstition and intolerance which at that time awaited whosoever was bold enough to make an attack on the theories of the Galenic school, he may, as is the opinion of Bayle on his anatomical studies in general, have made of his discovery a sort of mystery, *secretum nulli revelandum.* But it would be surprising, and repugnant to his entire character, if Sarpi had endeavoured, in the eyes of the two or three persons honoured with his confidence, to usurp a merit which did not belong to him.

My readers will, I hope, pardon me this long and somewhat pedantic digression, in consideration of the importance of the question, not in itself, but for the appreciation of the man I am treating of. I was bound to do justice to the might of Fra Paolo's genius. I am now, on the other hand, compelled to confess, with all impartiality, that in something he was deficient; a something which, perhaps, hindered even those great powers from producing all their fruits: this was unity. Sarpi was, as I have said, a living encyclopædia, but an encyclopædia made up of fragments, without any general principle to connect them. In this vast mind, which took in all the disco-

veries, all the great scientific results of the labours of the age and of his own studies, these results seem to have existed in a dispersed state: there was no all-embracing view, no comprehensive principle of union, such as binds together diverse sciences, gives to each its place in the universal scheme, determines their relation to each other, and creating the possibility of (as it were) summing up the labours accomplished and the development attained, points out to the human mind the path to new progression. In what remains to us of Sarpi there is not revealed to us that generalising and unifying tendency which produces great men and great results, that *synthetic* power,—inherent in Italian genius at all its grand epochs of activity,—and which, at that time, driven back by the Inquisition, by Spanish oppression, by Jesuit education, and by the Academies, entrenched itself in metaphysics, in the persons of Telesio, of Campanella, and, above all, of Giordano Bruno. Judging from the summary which Foscarini has transmitted to us of Sarpi's *Art of Thinking*,—*Arte di ben pensare* (*vid.* Bianchi, chap. iv.)—he seems not to have advanced in philosophy beyond Aristotle; and in like manner to have taken his ground in ethics upon a species of stoicism revived from the ancients. All feeling for the highest poetry was also unknown to him. Homer was to him nothing but an historian. Dante never receives from him the acknowledgment of a quotation. He is never alive to the importance of literature properly so termed. But indeed it could not be otherwise

with Sarpi. Philosophy is essentially the *synthesis* of human knowledge. Poetry, when truly of the highest kind, has more connection with philosophy in this sense than is generally thought: and the genius of Sarpi was almost exclusively analytical.

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The culminating point of the second series of Fra Paolo's labours is his *History of the Council of Trent.* The genius of Sarpi there shows itself entire, in the maturity of his faculties, of his experience, of the acquired tact which the practical study of men and things had added to his natural penetration. *The History of the Council* was, for the time in which it appeared, an event. Reprinted several times within a short period, translated into English, French, German, Latin—deemed so dangerous by the court of Rome, that even to this day, whenever an edition is undertaken, we may be sure that she will cause it to be followed by a reprint of the history written by Cardinal Pallavicini to counteract its effects—it is too little read in our time, perhaps (and Fra Paolo himself foresaw this)* because it has done its work. Nevertheless, even when the influence of the Council of Trent shall have perished entirely, this history will live. It will live as a specimen of composition, and in many respects as a model. Sarpi has somewhere laid down the maxim, that every history should form a complete

* *Vid.* Book iii., beginning.

whole, and should furnish in itself all the explanations it requires. This maxim has a brilliant application in his own work. The art in it is profound; so much the more profound as it is nowhere shown, and not till the perusal is finished does it reveal itself, by its effects, by the inevitable conclusions we draw from the entire performance. There exists a latent unity in the connection of its parts, not perceived at the first view, but which not the less does its work with the reader. Hence, despite the dryness of the subjects, despite the theological details every instant starting up, a perusal once commenced is not easily abandoned. A kind of dramatic interest, always increasing, diffuses itself over pages which Sarpi seems to have written with all the *bonhommie* and negligence of a chronicler: in alluding to the drama, I mean the Shaksperean drama, for as in the one, so in the other, some simple detail, a single trait, or a mere word, is often the key to a page or an entire book. Never, perhaps, since Tacitus has there been an historian possessing, as Sarpi does, the power of concentrating into a few words the meaning of an event or the portrait of a character. In a simple, clear, concise style, remote from even the shadow of affectation, but nervous and comprehensive, he sets before us the individuality he is dealing with, so that we seize and embrace it as if it were cut out in metal. Here, indeed, he truly excels, and I need give no other instance than his portraits of the Popes. There is here none of that studied

minuteness, to a certain degree conventional, which may be remarked in all the great historical painters of portraits; not one of those antitheses now traditional, or of those rhetorical artifices which, ever on the increase since the days of Sallust, so frequently betray our modern historians into mannerism; we find two traits only—a severe and deadly laconicism, and an air of simplicity, apparently unconscious of the blows it deals. Such is Sarpi. He strikes boldly, but exactly to the mark. He gives three lines to Leo X.; but these three lines furnish Pallavicini with several pages. He gives a few more to Paul IV.—but what lines they are!

"The severity of his manners," he says (chap. v.), "threw a gloom over the whole court, and created a far greater fear of reform than all the discussions of the Council. But this severity in his manner of life disappeared, as to his house and person, with his elevation to the Papacy, for, being asked by his major domo in what manner he desired to live, he replied, 'As becomes a great prince.' He determined to be crowned with unusual pomp. To his nephews and kinsmen he showed himself as indulgent as any of the Popes his predecessors. To all others he endeavoured to disguise his tendency to severity by an affectation of great mildness. Nevertheless, in a short time his natural disposition began again to manifest itself."

From their simplicity, these lines appear at the first reading almost insignificant; but scan them

well; each clause of the sentence is a trait, and a trait of the most profound meaning; it is a *tableau* in miniature of the Pope, the court of Rome, and the Papacy; the character of Paul IV., the effects of elevation to power, the permanent nepotism and corruption of the court, the uselessness of the Council,—all are there. His method of summing up an individual character, a line of policy, or an institution, in a few words, is peculiar to Fra Paolo. A few lines after, speaking of the erection of Ireland into a kingdom, and of the title of *King of Ireland* adopted by Henry VIII. and continued by Edward and Mary, he mentions the notion which the Pope was desirous of keeping alive, that it belonged to him alone to confer the rank of royalty, and the middle course he pursued of erecting that island into a kingdom by his own authority, taking no notice of what had been done by Henry VIII.:—

"So that the world might believe the Queen bore this title by the gift of the Pope, and not by the creation of her father. Thus the Popes have often given to the possessors that which they were unable to take away; and to avoid disputes, some of these have received their own property as a gift, and others have feigned ignorance of the gift and of the pretensions of the giver."

Is not this a noble page of the philosophy of history in a few lines? And do not the few following sentences contain a powerful refutation—condemnation I should rather say, for Sarpi never refutes—of

all the fawning pages written on the projects of reform attributed to Julius III., who, bragging of reforms to be accomplished, chose a numerous congregation of cardinals and prelates to carry them into effect?

"As a reason for appointing so great a number, the Pope alleged that he intended by it to give their resolutions greater maturity and a higher character with the world. It was, however, generally thought that the design was, by increasing their number, to multiply the obstacles to the attainment of any practical result, and make all the schemes end in nothing. Facts tested these opinions; for the reform, at first undertaken with ardour, proceeded more and more coldly for several months, by reason of the difficulties interposed, and was at last silently dropped" (chap. v.)

Thus writes Sarpi. He is a terrible unmasker of consciences, a scrutiniser of motives, whose keen Machiavellian eye dives beneath the action, and pierces the pretext under which it covers itself. Whenever he lights on a concealed aim in contradiction to the apparent, he lifts up the veil, or rather tears it, just enough to afford an opening for the public eye, and no further. Never does he break out into reproach, recrimination, or superfluous tirade. Seldom does he intervene in person to explain his object or to point out the inferences from his judgments; his habitual prudence never betrays him; but, as a counterbalance, what he says with every appearance of coldness, and almost of indifference, he says in a way to ensure your acceptance of it without feeling yourself called on for

an examination. He does not explain his history, but makes it explain itself. The secret causes that he unfolds, the consciences that he lays bare, are part of the history; they are incarnated in it, identified with it. He does not say *I think—I have discovered;* he *narrates* the results of his penetration with the air of a man who is laying before you documentary facts.

"The Pope" (Paul IV.), he says (chap. v.), "seeing that by the war he had lost that credit with which he had believed himself able to awe the whole world, thought of regaining it by an act of heroism, and on the 26th of January, in full council, he suddenly deprived the Cardinal Cariffa (his nephew) of the legation of Bologna, etc."

Now, when we know all that has been written—all the poetry and pathos that has been expended on this unexpected reaction of Paul IV. against his turbulent and profligate nephews, and on his measures, just in themselves, but not in their motive—we feel almost staggered by that inflexible coolness, that inexorable brevity, which so rebukes the whole body of rhetorical historians. All that I have hitherto quoted has been taken from the fifth chapter alone; but open where we will, the remarks will be equally applicable.

Then, beyond all this—beyond all these beauties of detail, all this skill of the artist-historian, all these individual portraits, which betray so much sagacity, so much penetration, and acquaintance with the recesses of the human heart—there is apparent, rather to the feeling than to the eye, pervading everything

though nowhere proclaimed, the great idea, the fixed aim of Sarpi, to reduce, not particular Popes, but *the* Pope, to the dimensions of an ordinary prince. In that idea consists the unity of the *History of the Council,* and there also is the secret of the irreconcilable, and what might seem the inexplicable hatred of the court of Rome towards Fra Paolo and his work.

At the present day we know well what to think of the Council of Trent and of the pretended religious inspiration, the testimony of the Church-Catholic, through which the Papacy then sought to renew its decaying life. We know that the Universal Church represented at the Council was a miserable fraction of the church; nay, not even that, but a manifestation of papal Rome, mystifying the fraction of the church that remained faithful to it. We know that "Spiritus Dei non *super* aquas, sed secus aquas ferebatur."* To reduce the grand notion of the Œcumenical Council to the dimensions of the royal parliaments of France prior to 1789, we require but the clause *Proponentibus Legatis,* which, from the beginning, con-

* The passage of the letter of Andrew Dudith, bishop of Five Churches, to Maximilian II., containing this line, appears to me so striking that I cannot resist the pleasure of quoting it entire: "Erant Episcopi illi conductitii plerique ut utres, rusticorum musicum instrumentum, quos, ut vocem mittant, inflare necesse est. Nil habuit cum illo S. Spiritus commercii; omnia erant humana consilia, quæ in immodicâ et sane quam pudendâ Pontificum tuendâ dominatione consumebantur: illinc responsa, tamquam Delphis aut Dodonâ, expectabantur: illinc nimirum Spiritus ille S. quem suis Conciliis præesse affirmant tabellarii, manticis inclusus mittebatur; qui, quod admodum ridiculum est, cum aliquando, ut fit, aquæ pluviis excrescerent, non ante advolare poterat, quam inundationes desedissent. Ita fiebat ut Spiritus non super aquas, ut est in Genesi, sed secus aquas ferretur."

ferred the initiative of all measures on the agents of the Pope; and the importance of which was understood only by one archbishop and three bishops. But if we did not know this, the work of Sarpi is there to show it to us. The Council of Trent was a political, not a religious transaction; such is the result of every page of Fra Paolo's history; and, in this view, the fifth and sixth chapters are particularly deserving the attention of the reader. The political action going on behind the curtain is throughout exposed to our eyes; throughout, the Popes appear as princes, and nothing more. All that rendered the old councils sacred and imposing had disappeared: no more traces of a feeling conscientiously religious; manœuvre, intrigue, parliamentary debate (and after the fashion of the parliaments of our own time) are presented. This Sarpi knew, and this he tells us. In this respect he is indeed what Sir Henry Wotton wrote beneath the portrait he sent to Doctor Collings—*Concilii Tridentini eviscerator.** The Papacy is revealed to us in these pages as it really existed in the 16th and 17th centuries—a huckstering, juggling, usurping, political power, making and unmaking alliances to round off the states of the church with a few feet of ground, or to settle some nephew or bastard of the Pontiff in a petty principality, making the convocation or postponement of a council which was to save the Christian religion in its peril subordinate to projects of Farnesian sovereignty at

* See the papers added to Burnet's *Life of Bedell*, London 1692. Wotton's letter appears to contradict the assertion of M. Bianchi, that Sarpi would never permit his portrait to be taken.

Parma and Piacenza. Sarpi never loses sight of this object; he seems, on some occasions, purposely to avoid the use of the Pope's name: "Thus do *men*," he says, after having related an instance of the inconsistency of Paul V.—"Thus do *men* judge differently of their own interests and those of others."

I have said that here lies the secret of the almost inexplicable hatred vowed towards Fra Paolo by the court of Rome—entirely inexplicable if we look at the efforts of Sarpi solely in reference to points of faith. Whatever may be asserted of him, Sarpi never touched on matters of dogma. Without admitting or absolutely rejecting, the anecdote (reported by Lebret of Leipsic in his *Historical Collection*, and quoted by Daru) which places Sarpi at the head of a secret association to establish Protestantism at Venice; without at all admitting the assertions advanced by Burnet, and repeated by Bayle, Courayer, and a hundred others, in the face of Sarpi's correspondence, which completely refutes them—I must affirm that, though the tendencies of Sarpi were evidently Protestant, and his sympathies Protestant, he himself never was a Protestant; never in his actions or writings did he give signs of more than a friendly disposition towards the Protestants. I refer those who may have doubts to M. Bianchi, and to a letter from Sarpi himself to Leschassier, dated the 23d of January 1610. Whence, then, arose that deadly hatred which produced the saying of Gregory XV. to the Venetian ambassador, that there never would be a lasting and sincere peace

between Rome and the republic so long as she retained Sarpi in her service? Whence came it that there was between him and the Papacy this inveterate war—war even to the knife?

It is because Sarpi was to the court of Rome a political enemy at a time when the Papacy was above all a temporal, a political power.

At the epoch of which we are speaking the Papacy was thoroughly conscious that her reign as a spiritual, and in the true sense of the word a Catholic, power was finished. She felt that the nations were no longer with her; neither were the kings; that at bottom it was only by fostering their divisions that she could exercise some little influence over them; and this is the key to her whole history during that age. She was conscious that the struggle of Charles V. and Francis I., or some similar struggle, was necessary to her existence. She felt that one-half of Europe having escaped her, the vital principle of her spiritual domination was deeply impaired; that the rest was from that day a mere question of time and circumstance; that when privileges have to be saved by sleight-of-hand, as in the case I have mentioned of Ireland, it must be all over with power: appearances are from thenceforward substituted for reality, and such a substitution cannot be indefinitely durable. The Papacy, powerful as long as she had been the rallying-point of the popular cause, abdicated her power on the day when she committed whoredom with the princes of the earth, on the day she descended to

Ghibellinism, and substituted aristocratic interests for the principle of democratic apostleship which was the life, soul, and energy of the ancient church. Little disposed, perhaps unable, from her internal constitution, to resume her pristine attitude, adapting it to the new wants of society—she tacitly resigned herself to undergo the inevitable consequences of her defection. She understood her situation far better than she admitted; and moreover, felt instinctively that if her political power came to be destroyed, it was all over with her; she would have nothing left; she would lose even those appearances which, for a more or less extended period, might yet serve to maintain her, and keep up the illusion of the people. Her temporal power was therefore her last intrenchment, and she was disposed to defend it with the courage, the ferocity of despair. Now, it was on this very ground that there arose to her in Sarpi a mighty enemy; she found herself attacked in this last intrenchment. Thence her terror, her fury, her hatred.

Did Sarpi, however, do good or ill in this? Has he thence a claim to the gratitude or the reproach of Italy and Europe? Could he have done more? Religious reformer as he must have been at heart, were it only from his profound knowledge of the then state of things and his logical understanding—was it good generalship to give battle on ground chosen by the enemy himself? or would he have done better for futurity by adopting the grand rule of all revolutionary warfare, so little understood or followed even now—

to oblige the enemy to receive your attack on a different ground from that chosen by himself? Did he not run a risk, common to all those who destroy and do not build, of one day leaving Italy without convictions —himself helping to inoculate her with the germs of materialist scepticism, the deadly foe of all great national feeling; of all national regeneration?

These are serious questions, and are not to be replied to here. They resolve themselves into those other questions so often proposed—Why did not the Reformation triumph in Italy as elsewhere? and was its failure a good or an evil?—questions deserving to be treated by themselves. They appear to me to have been hitherto very superficially handled. The Inquisition, the persecutions, the corrupt arts of the court of Rome, have been assigned as causes; but all of these existed elsewhere, and in my opinion should be ranked among secondary agents. I think that sufficient account has not been taken of a cause extremely potent: the antipathy then existing, and of which we find traces even in the reminiscences of Luther, between the North and the South. It must be remembered that the Germanic movement appeared in the light of a movement against Rome and Italy; that the old question of Guelphs and Ghibellines, with all its motives of irritation and suspicion, was the one which naturally presented itself to the eyes of the Italian people; that Italy, free or enslaved, republican, imperial, or papal, had till then ever had the glory of uniting Europe under one banner; that of this she was proud; and

that Protestantism, which put an end to unity, and vindicated against authority the rights of the individual conscience and of individual nationality, was not of a nature to excite her sympathies. I think also, as to the second part of the question, that it can hardly be resolved otherwise than by futurity, and by Italy herself. *There are Italians who believe that Italy could not, without abandoning the part assigned to her by Providence in the civilisation of Europe, formally throw off her unifying character; that she is bound to exist such as she is, till the moment when, throwing off her old formula of unity, she can substitute for it a new one; and that perhaps she is at this hour maturing in her bosom the germs of a religious transformation which will reveal itself with a political revolution, and whose European results will be of the highest importance.* Much remains to be done by the philosophy of history ere this question can be settled. But as to Sarpi, I conceive that it was neither in his power nor in his nature to do other than he did. Religious feeling, *faith*, was not at that time flourishing around him in Italy. The spirit of the age, taken in the mass, and not from individual exceptions, was exclusively analytical. That small band of men excepted, the martyrs of the Reformation, too little honoured in Italy —the philosophers, the mighty in intellect, had got beyond, and the masses were not up to, the religious problem then agitating in Europe. Bruno was a pantheist. Campanella outstepped not only Protestantism, but Christianity itself, by the whole extent of his political

Utopias. Florence was not Catholic but *Guelph;* so were the people of Italy generally; nor is this a mere distinction in words—everywhere the political question absorbed all others. In Germany the Reformation was a religious question, a question of belief: in Italy it was a question of politics, of discipline, of administration. All who were looked upon as Reformers were statesmen;* Sarpi among the first—and his character appears to us to be summed up in that word.

Sarpi was a statesman; a statesman such as was conceivable in the 16th and 17th century—such as the character is still too often conceived at the present day; and as such, he summed up his epoch in himself, and went not beyond it. He was not one of those men to whom enthusiasm, and the energy of convictions, either religious or religiously felt, communicates the power of setting in motion that unused activity, that surplus of hidden strength, which exists in the men of every age, and which is ready to strike out for itself new routes if any one will give a suitable initia-

* This was not only the case in Italy but elsewhere. The Reformation, principally a question of *faith* in the North, generally took the character of a *political* question in the South. What I have said receives a forcible illustration in France. In that country, a country of analysis, tending naturally to scepticism, a political design, that of maintaining the ascendancy of the princes of Bourbon over the Guises of the House of Lorraine, was at the bottom of the religious controversy. Coligny and the rest were, above all, party leaders; and it was rather from a political calculation than from ardent belief that they became the chiefs of Calvanism and the Huguenots; it gave them an army, a force always ready, and hostile to the Guises; it gave them the hope of support from the German princes and Elizabeth; it moreover placed their cause under the protection of a great principle, that of liberty of conscience.

tive. He was one of those who, taking in at one glance all the elements, all the forces actually in operation, know how to bring them into play, and to put them in a favourable position for drawing from them the grandest results which they are capable of yielding. Such men do not create the future, but they organise, define, and ascertain the present, so well and so clearly, that they assure a starting-point and a safe career to those after them who may be inclined to push farther. They make no new conquests; but they publish, proclaim, and render for ever permanent, those conquests, not yet duly recognised, which the human mind has, by the force of circumstances, already worked out, but is still imperfectly conscious of, and has not followed to their consequences. They give the force of law to latent fact, and thus set intelligence beyond the chance of wandering, or of losing time about points already gained. It was for a mission of this kind that Sarpi was made. And for this purpose his station was necessarily, if I may so express myself, not on the furthest confines of his epoch, but in its centre, in the very heart of his age and country. Such he was. Sarpi was the expression, but the highest possible expression, of Venice, of Italy, and of his age. Italy and the age were political—so was he; they were diplomatic—so was he; they were Machiavellian—he was a continuation of Machiavel. He found religion changed to a mere science of government; this science, which was detestable, he attacked. He found the Papacy a temporal power; he attacked it with arms

borrowed from another temporal power. He found opposed to him, in the popes themselves, and in their defenders, bad lawyers and bad theologians; to be in the right against them he made himself a theologian and lawyer. He saw in the Jesuits a political organisation of the most alarming sort for the defence of the Papacy; and to the Jesuits he was all his life the most unappeasable of political enemies.

Do I lower Sarpi in saying this? Do I do injustice to his extraordinary talents and activity, in thus claiming for the age in which he lived a part of that influence which it has been attempted by a slight exaggeration to concentrate wholly and entirely in Fra Paolo? No. Fra Paolo's part stands not the less noble or important: and though I hold, as a legitimate consequence of my estimation of him, that even if Sarpi had not existed, Venice would not the less have resisted the Interdict, the part he enacted still appears to me to deserve the place I have assigned to it. His intervention gave to the resistance of Venice the sanction of intellect; it destroyed, theologically and historically, the arms with which Rome might have renewed the combat at a later period. That which yet was but a vague instinct, he reduced to a logical formula of clear, plain, and well-ascertained principles: he, so to speak, revealed the age and the country to themselves; and that which would have been but an isolated resistance, based on force, was changed, thanks to Sarpi, into a general fact—general in its consequences and in its principle.

Moreover, in emancipating myself from the tendency still so common amongst writers, and so aristocratic in its principle, that of absorbing an entire age or a whole people in a single individual, I do but follow out one of my first observations on Sarpi. There was something within him which ever opposed obstacles to his doing all that his gigantic powers, fertilised by a different principle, would have rendered him capable of. Analysis, too exclusively pursued, had planted in him a germ of what I might have called eclecticism, had not the word been discredited by the French eclectics of these later times. In Sarpi it took the form of a hesitation in throwing himself firmly forwards where his intellect impelled him—a disposition not to deduce all the consequences of the principle he proclaimed—to compromise a little too much with what was established—to set forth a luminous truth, and at the very same time (by a kind of see-saw policy, still too much in vogue) give his sanction to a contemporary error, or even an injustice—to push on to the very verge of a new conquest, of a new region, and suddenly halt at the bare suggestion of overstepping the boundary. Sarpi had not been intended by nature for an *initiator*. In science he had sublime glimpses, which he followed not; grand presentiments which he cared not to develop. In social policy he had glimmerings and aspirations for something better than the monarchical duality he defended—see among others his letter of the 14th April 1617. Perhaps he divined (what I believe to be true) that Italy cannot

be regenerated unless by a grand religious change; but the courage, the strength to assume the leadership, were wanting to him. "We Italians" (he somewhere says) "do little, and remain behind others by our prudence, and our wishing to do too well." This was perhaps, in some degree, his own defect. Fra Fulgenzio informs us that even in matters of common life a certain hesitation always accompanied him whenever it was necessary to act; I say *act*, for on a question of suffering or resisting, of persevering in a course once chosen, we know he did not hesitate.

Sarpi, in his public career, and in the struggle he maintained against Papal Rome, was, I repeat, a great statesman—the first of his time; and this is the explanation of his whole life, and of all his tactics. Like most statesmen, he had no great faith in human nature. He preferred waiting for events, and drawing from them the greatest possible profit *for* his ideas, to all attempts to determine their course, to create facts *through* ideas, and in the name of ideas. He acted towards the Papacy as a powerful dissolvent; and this broadly distinguishes him from Luther, a violent destroyer. Luther was a man of attack; he felt a passion for overturning; he saw Evil, and wished to level it himself; he marched straight to the centre of the question, neglected all the rest, and often even contradicted himself on details. Sarpi was a man of defence, of resistance; but of the resistance which weakens and fatigues the enemy, and ends by making him lose self-control. He made war like Fabius; he desired to see Evil

overthrown, but not by him; he preferred so to act that it should fall of itself, by the slow infallible working of its internal principle of corruption; he sought every occasion of developing and manifesting this principle, and left the rest to time and opinion. He aimed not at the enemy's heart; he made no attempt to gain by assault the edifice he wanted to destroy; but he laid waste all round; he undermined it at all its weakest points; his policy could never be detected in the slightest inconsistency; all his efforts tended to isolate the power he had condemned; he knew well that, isolated and condemned to inaction, it must perish. He was more delighted at a blunder committed by the enemy than at an advantage directly won by himself. It was his joy to see the Papacy lose her way among pretensions she could not maintain; his joy to see discredit brought on her by her own arrogance or the blunders of her defenders.

"The Pope has said of the sermons of Father Fulgenzio, that there is some good in them, but that he insists too much on the Holy Scriptures, and that he who attempts to abide by them in everything will ruin the Catholic faith. People do not altogether approve this language; but, for my part, I applaud it" (Letter of the 10th May 1609). "All this vexatious espionage that is employed I am glad of, knowing that a jealous lover augments the hatred borne him, and in the end ensures the shaking off of his yoke" (July 22, 1608). "So there will be three popes at once, and that will be excellent" (*Id.*)

It is in his correspondence that Sarpi must be studied; his calmness, his cheerfulness, his prudence, his moderation, must be sought there. Luther, boiling with anger, rough, irritable, frequently lost his temper and injured his cause; he would then retract —often with remorse, alarm of conscience, and inward struggles: Sarpi felt nothing of this. Luther, moreover, though eminently a revolutionist, rejected all other weapons than words: "Words," said he, "whilst I was sleeping peacefully, or drinking beer with my friend Melanchthon, shook the Papacy as never prince or emperor did before." Sarpi, though merely a reformer, would willingly have accepted other means of advancing his cause—even force. "I am ready to avow to you," he says on the 27th of April 1610, "that Fra Paolo desires to see war in Italy, for he would then hope to effect something to the honour of God and the profit of the gospel." When he heard that the King of England was putting forth books against Rome—"That is all very well," said he, "but why, instead of books, does he not do something in his own line?" Sarpi, fighting against one power in behalf of another power, had more faith in princes and the arts of policy than in the people; whilst Luther, making use of princes, but really fighting only for his ideas, and for the independence of the human mind, had faith in himself above all, and in the convictions with which he inoculated the multitude. At bottom Sarpi *knew* more, but Luther *believed* more. Accordingly, the *immediate* results of their efforts were widely

different; the one dealing with matters of faith and speaking with faith, acted upon the masses, even when not intending it; the other, and with him all the Italian Reformers of his time, working almost diplomatically, and in the sphere of what was then legality, were very influential on men of letters, on statesmen and princes, but slightly and rarely on the people. With such elements what could be done? How go beyond Erasmus, or in other words, a *juste-milieu*, political and religious?

'The definite result of both, as regards the Papacy, is at the present day much the same; the two routes converge to the same point. As a spiritual power the Papacy is dead in Italy, as elsewhere; there is no longer faith in her; no longer dominion in her voice —since that voice has been heard to bless Nicholas and condemn the insurrection of Poland; no longer dominion by the cross, since she abandoned Christian Greece and betrayed sympathy for the crescent of Mahmoud; no longer dominion by the pride of nationality; since she took Metternich for her *gendarme*, and handed over the custody and oppression of her states to Austrian bayonets. At the point of these bayonets are now executed the edicts of the Vicegerent of Christ. Since then, the religious question in Italy has, as an immediate question, been altogether absorbed in the political. The one will settle the other; victory in the one will inevitably be victory in the other. Let the few scattered minds who make poetry on ruins, and fancy they are making religion

—who, in petty sects of pretended philosophy, amuse themselves with dreams of the establishment of universal liberty by means of the Papacy—ponder deeply on these things. To Italy, and to her revolution, when it comes, will belong the last word on the question. The first Italian revolution will make of the Rome of the people a different thing from the Rome of the Pope. The principle of popular government once proclaimed, there is nothing left for the Catholic world but a Council of Christendom.

ON THE POEMS OF VICTOR HUGO.

(First published in the *British and Foreign Review*, 1838.)

PRIOR to the publication of *Les Voix Intérieures (The Inward Voices)*, the *Chants du Crépuscule* were the latest poetic manifestation of Victor Hugo; and in reference to them it was elsewhere said, "The Muse of Victor Hugo is a setting star. The beams that she radiates are melancholy as a remembrance. Fame, who had soared hovering so noisily around the poet, vanishes like a tone that has not found its correspondent chord. The uncontested influence which he so recently exercised over a contemporaneous genera-

tion, has died rapidly away, like an usurped power. The time is come for subjecting this influence to examination; for investigating the sources, the secret, the parent thought of this influence, without fear lest some unforeseen revelation, some new burst of poetic light, should teach us that we have, by our analysis, profaned the inviolability of a powerful and active life. The intellect of the author is still fruitful, but the life of the poet is fulfilled; the circle of his manifestations is exhausted. He may reproduce, may imitate, may translate himself under new forms; but he has no longer anything to create, he has no new chords to touch. The *Lays of Twilight* are the song of the swan. We shall perhaps hear yet one word of resignation—but it will be the last; the poet's farewell! The few spirits who do not forget will yet respond lovingly to that lay: then night will come; the dark night of indifference and oblivion, that shrouds men and things, that effaces, in these years of transition, so many cherished names, so many reputations and hopes."

The *Voix Intérieures* have, I think, justified a presentiment which those who had attentively followed the literary course of Victor Hugo needed no spirit of prophecy to conceive.

Les Feuilles d'Automne, 1831, were in many respects the poet's apogee. In them were found melancholy, graceful ease, spontaneity, sweet and heartfelt thoughts; inspirations sublime in their simplicity and genuinely Christian, of sympathy with childhood, of charity towards the poor; there were likewise here

and there gleams of futurity, glimpses, however feeble, of that wondrous unity which reveals God through creation, and some divinations of that universal soul which breathes, if the expression be allowable, throughout all nature; and this clothed in a language almost always poetic, free from exaggeration, less loaded with imagery, less symbolical, and in some sort more straightforward than that of his other works. Ever since the poet has regularly declined. The *Chants du Crépuscule*, although replete with beauty, are upon the whole an inferior collection. The *Voix Intérieures* are a step below the *Chants du Crépuscule*. Of the dramatic essays that have appeared during the interval I do not speak: it is not as a dramatist that M. Victor Hugo will be remembered by posterity; but these likewise are inferior, and very inferior, to their predecessors.

Not that the *Voix Intérieures* do not contain beauty, and even great beauty: it could not be otherwise. Whatever literary reaction may assert, in that spirit of *classicism* which seems at the present day to be making its way into French criticism, Victor Hugo has been, and still is a powerful poet. There are passages in this volume, as in all his others, that reveal lyric inspiration; of this no better proof is required than the Ode *à l'Arc de Triomphe*. Whenever he sits down by the family hearth and speaks of infancy (he, the father of four delightful children), Victor Hugo gives us those sweet, tender, and simple touches for which all mothers love him,—witness the

pretty verses, *à des oiseaux envolés.* But in general these are signs of weariness, negligence, I might almost say faint-heartedness. No more of the elasticity of youth; no more of that enthusiastic audacity—so becoming to the poet, so nearly allied to faith,—which undertakes to create its own audience, and admits not a doubt of success. Now one might fancy that he sang as a duty; that he merely fulfilled a poetic mission,—without relying upon an audience, without regard to the results. At his outset he hoped to invent creeds, now he is content with bearing witness to them. These are things that cannot be proved, but are felt; and I believe that every attentive reader will feel them with me as he closes the present volume. That unity at which Victor Hugo aimed in his *Feuilles d'Automne* and in his *Orientales* is here evidently wanting. It would be impossible to sum up its purport in a single word. I do not say this as pointing out a positive fault in a collection of poems, but in proof of the disproportion existing between the conception and the execution; for *Les Voix Intérieures*, as Victor Hugo himself tells us, is not a collection of poems, but a book "continuing the thought deposited in former productions."

The inequality in artistic merit, not merely between the several compositions contained in the volume, but between the parts of many a single composition, is more striking in the *Voix Intérieures* than in its predecessors. Inspirations, deserving in any respect to be termed original, are here few,—too few. Those

which have always possessed the poet's soul have given again birth to some fine bursts of poetry; but to none that surpass, or even equal, their earlier fruit in the *Autumnal Leaves* and his other volumes. In the *Voix Intérieures* there is much that is merely an echo of the past; and as in every echo, something stifled, something sad: it might be termed a voice from the tomb. Compare, for instance, the Ode *à Olympio* of the *Voix Intérieures*, with that entitled *Dédain*, and addressed to Lord Byron, of the *Feuille d'Automne*; compare *Avril* to the *Pluie d'Eté*, or any other of the same kind in the *Odes* and *Balades*. The thought is essentially the same, appearing under various circumstances; there is much analogy between the two studies of the landscape painter; but do we find in the latter the same energy of expression, the same freshness of colouring, that the former exhibits? Even there where Victor Hugo is always fine, always a master-spirit, in his infantine toyings and his appeals to charity, who but must prefer to his *Voix Intérieures*, No. xx., "See where the children in a circle sit," etc.; or even to his xxii., "To birds that have flown away," —simple and childlike as it is,—his *Feuilles d'Automne*, No. xv., "Oh, trouble not the children there," etc., and yet more the five admirable concluding stanzas of xix., "The child appears?"* The fine chant, "God is ever nigh," cannot but fade, despite its indisputable

* I cannot deny myself the pleasure of here recalling four of those pure and affecting stanzas; all mothers will feel obliged to me:—

Enfant, vous etes l'aube	Thou, babe, that art the dawn,
. . . . .	. . . . .

merit, before the recollection of those *Autumnal Leaves*, of which so many passages will long survive: "For the Poor," and "The Universal Prayer;" "The Prayer for all!"

Car vos beaux yeux sont pleins de douceurs infinies,
Car vos petites mains, joyeuses et bénies,
N'ont point mal fait encor;
Jamais vos jeunes pas n'ont touché notre fange!
Tête sacrée! enfant aux cheveux blonds! bel ange
A l'auréole d'or!

Vous êtes parmi nous la colombe de l'arche.
Vos pieds tendres et pure n'ont point l'age où l'on marche
Vos ailes sont d'azur.
Sans le comprendre encor, vous regardez le monde.
. . . . . .
Il est si beau, l'enfant, avec son doux sourire,
Sa douce bonne foi, sa voix qui veut tout dire,
Ses pleurs vite apaisés,
Laissant errer sa vue etonnée et ravie,
Offrant de toutes part sa jeune âme à la vie,
Et sa bouche aux baisers!

Seigneur! preservez moi, préservez ceux que j'aime,
Frères, parents, amis, et mes ennemis même
Dans le mal triomphants.
De jamais voir, Seigneur! l'été sans fleurs vermeilles,
La cage sans oiseaux, la ruche sans abeilles,
La maison sans enfants!

In whose soft eyes such stores of sweetness rest,
Whose tiny hands, so joyous and so blest,
With wrong are yet unspeck'd;
Whose infant steps our mire has ne'er defiled!
Sacred thine angel head, thou fair-hair'd child,
With golden halo decked!

Our dove from th' ark art thou, herald of God!
Tender and pure, thy feet on earth ne'er trod,
Thy wings are azure-hued;
Thou look'st, uncomprehending, at the world;
. . . . . .
How beautiful the child, with his sweet smile,
His eager voice, his trust, unfearing guile,
His tears, dried as they fall,
His looks, where wonder and delight are rife,
Still offering his nascent soul to life,
His kissing lips to all!

Spare, mighty Lord! spare me and all I love,
Friends, brethren, kindred, even foes who move
'Gainst me in triumph wild,
From e'er beholding summer reft of flowers,
Beeless the hive, birdless the wire-wove bowers,
The house without a child!

[Mazzini goes on to quote the *Dieu est toujours là* ("God is ever nigh"), which, he says, with the xxii., almost the whole of the xxiv. ("To Eugene H."), and a great part of the iv., *A l'Arc de Triomphe* ("To the Triumphal Arch"), comprises nearly all that is really fine in *Les Voix Intérieures.* They are, however, too long for insertion here. Of the *Dieu est toujours là* Mazzini says: It is a lay of consolation for the poor, a hymn to God and to charity who watch over poverty; an affecting supplication to men that they would, through charity, seek affinity with God.]

. . . . . .

No isolated stanza is particularly striking, but the whole is enchanting. So sweetly does the spirit of charity murmur through it that, as we read on, we feel in the soul a something analagous to the physical impression produced by the purling sound of an unseen brook which, without fixing our attention, inclines us to reverie and lulls us to sleep. One single deficiency is to be regretted in this poem, as in all those with which a Christian thought has inspired M. Victor Hugo; it is, that in his appeals to the rich, in behalf of corporal wants, no appeal in behalf of mental wants ever mingles. Why is his Muse never the patroness of the education of poor children? Why does he never give the finishing touch to his picture of charity by introducing this second office, not less holy and more important than the first? When Bartolini, the great Florentine sculptor of our days, conceived his statue of Charity, giving the breast to one child, and with

her finger teaching the letters of the alphabet to a second, did he not produce a more splendid and complete poem?

I would gladly extract some passages from the xxii. "To birds that have flown away;" or some of the recollections of childhood from the xxix., "To Eugene H.;" but must forbear, for I have still much to say.

La tombe dit à la rose, a little piece in two stanzas, is a sweet thought of hope, born betwixt a flower and a tomb, Christian in its conception, yet recalling Saadi and the East by the perfume it breathes. The graceful beauty of this short poem enhances our sense of a fault into which M. Victor Hugo too often falls, and which, in the present collection, weakens the effect even of those compositions which he appears to have deemed the most important, and as such to have most carefully laboured: it is the fault of saying everything, of saying too much: and this whether he meditates or whether he depicts. Give him a nook of a garden or a wing of an old castle, and he will tell you, of the first, every flower one by one, the trees, the rills, the pebbles; of the second, the roof, the portico, the pediments, the door, the architraves, the caryatides; what more? the moss, the ivy, the lichen, the bird building its nest, the spider spreading its web there. Give him a thought; he will take and retake, turn and re-turn it, view it under every aspect, from above, from below, separate it into its elements, until he has so thoroughly exhausted it, that no one can say, "You have left a part of that thought in obscurity."

He explores, he displaces, he isolates, he anatomises. He leaves his subject, if I may be allowed the comparison, like a house after a search-warrant.

This is connected with a tendency of which I shall speak by and by; but even considering it, for the moment, solely in relation to art, such a course is, in two ways, seriously objectionable. In the first place, it leaves the reader nothing to do. In every powerful poetic impression the *vague* claims a full quarter; and this *vague*, which must not be confounded with the *obscure*, is the soul's own field, its milky way towards the infinite, where it builds the arch of the bridge that should lead to God. Now the great secret, the great power of poetry lies in the very act of placing the soul in presence of this vague, of this infinite field—by giving it wings to soar thither. Written poetry, like music performed, should be, in some sort, a prelude to other poetry, which the excited soul of the reader composes silently within itself. In other words, that will ever be the best poetry which renders the reader most poetical; as the best education will ever be, not that which teaches most, but that which imparts the greatest capacity for thought.

Victor Hugo's course does not correspond with these views. By his minute analytic labour he suppresses the vague, the infinite, even the very desire for them; he kills the impression by a surfeit; by dint of defining and materialising he limits and confines; he leaves the reader's faculties torpid, inactive, passive. Nor is this all: in the second place, it often happens

that in striving to exhaust an idea he spoils it: he diverts our attention from the whole to the parts, and weakens, by multiplying, his effects. Let us take for instance the great heroic ode of the present volume, that addressed to the Triumphal Arch. The fundamental idea of the poem is, that this monument requires the consecration of time to render it truly poetic.

Il manque sur ta tête un sombre amas d'années	Thou want'st a darkling mass upon thy head
Qui pendent pêle-mêle et toutes ruinées	Of years, in ruin and confusion spread
Aux brèches de ton front !	Amidst the breaches of thy brow.
Il te manque la ride et l'antiquité fière	Thou want'st the wrinkle, glory of old age;
Le passé, pyramide où tout siècle a sa pierre,	The past, where centuries stamp their pilgrimage;
Les chapiteaux brisés, l'herbe sur les vieux fûts;	Capitals broken, o'er which grass waves high;
Il manque sous ta voûte où notre orgueil s'élance	Thou want'st beneath thy vault, dear to our pride,
Ce bruit mystérieux qui se mêle au silence,	The mystic sounds 'mid silence that abide,
Le sourd chuchotement des souvenirs confus !	The whisp'rings hoarse of wilder'd memory.

Would not the bold expression of the idea in the opening lines here quoted be finer and more impressive if standing thus alone, than repeated, as it is, through six stanzas? for there are five more stanzas similar in all their applications. The poet next paints Paris as it is—Paris, noisy, grumbling, in ceaseless agitation, building, demolishing; twisting in its mighty furnace laws, systems, creeds, morals, men, and things; then, suddenly, Paris dead, Paris deserted, Paris dust; the arch standing, sublime with concentrated recollec-

tions, reigning over solitude, revealing a whole history (twenty years of battles and Napoleon) to the pilgrim from afar, who prostrates himself as he interrogates the lonely monument. We have here great and original beauties:—

Quand des toits, des clochers, des ruches tortueuses,
Des porches, des frontons, des domes pleins d'orgueil
Que faisaient cette ville, aux voix tumultueuses,
Touffue, inextricable, et fourmillante à l'œil,

Il ne restera plus dans l'immense campagne,
Pour toute pyramide et pour tout panthéon,
Que deux tours de granit faites par Charlemagne,
Et qu'un pilier d'airain fait par Napoleon :

Toi, tu compléteras le triangle sublime !
L'airain sera la gloire et le granit la foi ;
Toi, tu seras la porte ouverte sur la cime
Qui dit : il faut monter pour venir jusqu' à moi !

Tu salûras là-bas cette église si vieille,
Cette colonne altière au nom toujours accru,
Debout peut-être encor, ou tombée, et pareille
Au clairon monstrueux d'un Titan disparu.

Et sur ces deux débris que les destins rassemblent,

When of the steeples, roofs and tortuous hives,
Domes, porticoes, pilasters, all that forms
This town, where tumult still with tumult strives,
Thicket-like lab'rinth, where existence swarms,

Sole remnant left upon the desert plain,
Sole monument of fall'n supremacy,
Shall two old granite towers of Charlemagne
And the brass pillar of Napoleon be:

Thou the sublime triangle shalt complete :
For faith let granite stand ; for glory, brass ;
Thou, for the door opening tow'rd heavenly seat,
Proclaiming, 'He must climb who here would pass.'

Thou shalt salute yon church, already old ;
This column proud, more honour'd day by day ;
Standing perchance, or prostrate, as unroll'd
Some perish'd Titan's giant trumpet lay.

And o'er the double ruins thrown reason

Pour toi l'aube fera resplendir à la fois	By fate, each rising sun shall radiant show
Deux signes triomphants qui de loin se ressemblent :	Two conqu'ring emblems that alike appear ;
De près l'un est un glaive et l'autre est une croix !	A sword the one, a cross the other know !
Sur vous trois poseront mille ans de notre France.	On ye a thousand years of France shall weigh ;
La colonne est le chant d'un règne à peine ouvert ;	A reign the column hymns, by Fate's design
C'est toi qui finiras l'hymne qu'elle commence.	Cut short ; thou shalt conclude th' incipient lay :
Elle dit : Austerlitz ! tu diras : Champaubert !	Her cry be Austerlitz ; Champaubert thine.

Who could not gladly cry to the poet—"Hold! you have said enough; leave us to meditate; allow us to sing in our turn within our own souls: you have given us a grand idea; kill it not with the scalpel of analysis?" But Victor Hugo pauses not. He retreads his course; he begins anew; he takes his idea to pieces: he turns time into a workman, digging, setting stones, pulling down; he describes his operations day by day; to-day he will "hide little birds in the mouths of the statues;" to-morrow he will "cover up to the *navel* with foliage a Venus which now stands naked under a beautiful heraldic portico;" the day after to-morrow he will do something else; and amidst this laboriously minute inspection we meet with languid, colourless stanzas, prosaic as the water of a gutter after a splendid storm; such stanzas as the following:—

C'est le temps qui creuse une ride	'Tis Time who furrows wrinkles deep
Dans un claveau trop indigent ;	In coigne stone, indigent and dumb ;
Qui sur l'angle d'un marbre aride	Who marble edges, sharp and steep,
Passe son pouce intelligent ;	Blunts with his intellectual thumb.

C'est lui qui, pour couronner l'œuvre,
Mêle une vivante couleuvre
Aux nœuds d'une hydre de granit.
Je crois voir rire un toit gothique
Quand le temps dans sa frise antique
Ote une pierre et met un nid!

The work more perfect still to make;
'Tis he who twines a living snake
Around some granite hydra's breast:
The Gothic roof, methinks, laughs loud,
When from its frieze, antique and proud,
Time rends a stone to place a nest.

This may be called caressing an idea; but there are caresses that deflower, and these, I say it with regret, are of the number. These faults are repeated, redoubled, so to say, upon themselves. What befalls the ode, befalls the stanza likewise: the fire of the poet dies away: he sinks with fatigue; occasionally he destroys the whole effect of a passage by some secondary detail in the last line. As, for instance,—

La, c'est le regiment, ce serpent des batailles,
Trainant sur mille pieds ses luisantes écailles,
Qui tantôt, furieux, se roule au pied des tours,
Tantôt, d'un mouvement formidable et tranquille,
Troue un rempart de pierre et traverse une ville
Avec son front sonore où battent vingt tambours!

The regiment, that serpent of the fight,
Dragging on thousand feet his scales so bright,
Coils furiously the castle's foot around;
Or formidably tranquil, calm and slow,
Along stone ramparts through the town will go
With noisy front, where twenty drums aye sound.

Sometimes he falls asleep in insignificant or unintelligible stanzas, such as the following:—

La morne Palenquè git dans les marais verts.
A peine entre ses blocs d'herbe haute couverts
Entend-on le lézard qui bouge.
Ses murs sont obstrués d'arbres au fruit vermeil
Où volent, tout moirés par l'ombre et le soleil,
De beaux oiseaux de cuivre rouge!

The mournful denizens of marshes green,
Where over clods amidst tall grass unseen
The lizard scarce is heard to crawl;
Where beauteous birds of copper-red, by shade
And sunshine speckled, fly o'er trees, down weigh'd
With crimson fruit, cumb'ring the wall.

Another class of faults belongs half to what may be termed the stage-effect mania, half to a false view of art; or rather, to speak more correctly, to a view, just in itself, but so exaggerated as to become false. The idea put forth by Victor Hugo at the very commencement of his career—to wit, "That in everything there is a little of everything, and therefore that the poetic element exists in every object whatever it be,"—often leads him either into a forced combination of two very distinct objects, of which he takes the one for the image, the other for the idea, and makes their distance the more striking by his habit of minute detail; or else betrays him into calling upon his readers to behold with him a rich source of poetic emotion, a profound lesson, in things that really contain neither the one nor the other. As examples of this I may cite the *Voix Intérieures* xxii., "The Past," and xv., "The Cow." In the first we have a great castle of the times of Louis XIII., which he paints as forlorn, dark, desolate, inhabited only by "fair stags that seem the hunters to regret," and where in the recesses of the wood "is an old cave that *yawns in weariness*;" and yet, says the poet, a *king* and a *duchess* once walked lovingly in this wood, beside this castle :—

O temps évanouis! O splendeurs eclipsées!	Oh vanished times! splendours eclipsed for aye!
O soleils descendus derrière l'horizon!	Oh suns behind the horizon that have set!

In the second we have a large and handsome red

cow, with white spots, and a group of children nestled underneath her udder milking her;—all technically and somewhat baldly* described—whilst the cow looks absently elsewhere. And this cow is nature—the universal mother: these children are the philosophers and poets; the absent look means that nature is meditating upon God! Now, this image, which presented in one stroke might be really just and poetical, seems much in danger of degrading the idea, and of provoking a smile rather than admiration, when shown to us thus circumstantially, thus anatomised; when, to say nothing of the homeliness of the operation, these children have been individualised to us by the information that their "teeth are of marble," their "hair brushy," their "faces fresh," and their "clothes blacker than an old wall smeared with charcoal;" when the cow is thus specifically described as having red hair with white spots!

I must add (for the praises that I have bestowed with cordial pleasure upon whatever appeared to deserve well, entitle me to speak out without incurring a suspicion of malevolence), that there are in this volume too many pieces, even whole poems, written with a degree of negligence which is, as it seems to me, a positive insult to the reader. I do not speak of the language, but of the poetic expression, which is sus-

* Et sous leurs doigts pressant le lait par mille trous,
Tiraient le pis fécond de la mère au poil roux.

Milk through their fingers is a-streaming now,
As hard they pull each dug o' th' red-haired cow.

ceptible of appreciation in all countries. I am not of that school of critics who would have poetry always walk on stilts; but what can be said of stanzas such as the following, in the ode upon the death of Charles X.?—

> O kings! Oh mingled families!
> Sudden o'erthrow of ancient majesties!
> Calamities in ambuscade
> 'Mid turnings of prosperity thus laid!

Or those from xxiv., "Upon the Sea," beginning—

O marins perdus!

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

. . . . . .

Except the pieces already named, and perhaps two others—xxvii., "After reading Dante," of which the idea is good; and xvii., "An Evening at Sea,"—the *Voix Intérieures* offer nothing striking. The death of Charles X. has not inspired the poet, which is, I think, natural enough; the few lines consecrated to that monarch, when setting forth for exile, in the Ode to *La jeune France*, printed in 1830, were far better; there, indeed, the contrast afforded something actually poetic; the second subject furnishes nothing that does not belong to every man's death. The rest of the poems are nearly insignificant; some of them, such as xxvii., *Pensar dudar* ("To Think to Doubt"), have analogous and infinitely superior predecessors in former volumes.

But there is still something more; there is a sense

of disappointment, which, to me, did not originate in the present volume, but which this volume has irrevocably confirmed. We have a right to demand much, especially in times like ours, from those men who approach the sacred shrine of poesy. If the importance of the poet's mission is to be estimated relatively to the moral wants of the generation for which he sings, assuredly it never was more important than now. In the existing struggle between two principles, in which all Europe is more or less involved, the object even of art should be to impel men towards the one or the other, to breathe into them the virtues and the enthusiasm indispensably requisite to enable them to triumph without guilt. In the evident exhaustion of European poetry and literature, amidst the scepticism thus generated in all minds, the object should be to remake a poetry for men, to remake believers for the poet. But whatever be the case with respect to these general expectations, I need not seek in them a justification of our demands upon Victor Hugo: we owe our right against him to himself. He is not to be judged as a sentimental poet, or as a descriptive poet, or as a narrative poet. He belongs to no one class, because he belongs to all. He *will* be a *poet*, and under the title "poet" he comprehends all that others divide. He understands the poet's mission in its amplest extent, refusing no responsibility. He believes, as I do, that creation in its fulness is the poet's domain, that it is not only the poet's right, but his duty, to touch upon politics,

upon society, upon religion; that the poet must be at once an educator, a priest, and a prophet. He said it at the first; he says it again now, in the preface to his *Voix Intérieures:* "If man have his voice, if nature have hers, events have theirs likewise. The author has always held the mission of the poet to be the blending of this triple language into one group of lays." We must therefore judge him in reference to the starting-post and the goal that he has assigned himself.

Victor Hugo, finding himself at his poetical outset placed in presence of the struggle, of the void just mentioned, and which have since been constantly increasing, addressed himself to seek the solution of the problem, to fill up the void, to appease the strife. Every step he has taken has been a step of research; and for this reason each of his books can, as I have said, be characterised by a single word. His first collection, *Odes et Balades* (1818-26), implied "Monarchy and Catholicism." In his preface he declared that "the history of mankind presents us with poetry only when appreciated from the height of monarchical ideas and of religious creeds;" and accordingly he wrought with ardour, enthusiasm, and boldness, like a man full of faith, and confident in what he was doing. In his second volume, *Les Orientales* (1828-29), faith was already wanting. He no longer felt the solution to be infallible. The age continued still to advance, but not in the direction that he had assigned to the human intellect. Trembling for the

edifice, which he had in his mind's eye seen rebuilt, and for the destiny of the art which he had sought to connect with that edifice, and feeling himself exclusively or mainly a poet, he hastened to sever the latter from the former. He now isolated art; he affirmed that genius has his own object, his own law, owing fealty to himself alone. In his preface we find these strange words: "The poet must go where he will, doing what he will—that is his law. Let him believe in God or in gods, in Pluto or in Satan, in Canidia, Morgana, or in nothing. Be he of the North or of the South, of the East or of the West; be he ancient or modern, 'tis well! The poet is free." And relying upon these grounds he wrought boldly. His motto was, "Art for Art's sake!"

Two years later, in 1831, when his *Autumnal Leaves* appeared, his faintness of heart had increased. His first thesis was now entirely abandoned; the second remained, but was asserted with less boldness, with less satisfaction; the poet was sad. The void that he had aspired to fill up for the general advantage threatened to swallow himself; he endeavoured to escape from, or to lull, his sense of danger by flinging himself into the arms of Nature and of God: and to this effort he is indebted for his best—probably his last—inspiration. But this effort could not be continuous; of which we have the proof in *Les Chants du Crépuscule* (1835). We here find a remarkable oscillation. On the one hand, for him the heavens themselves were growing dark, God paled

before his doubt-tortured* soul; on the other, the world and its riddle still rose up before him, alluring him by the singular and prophetic spectacle which was daily more and more developed to his eyes. He beheld strange gleams on the eastern horizon; he heard the multitude calling upon the poets to explain what this might be—and in the name of the poets he replied (*La Prélude*):—

Nous voyons bien là-bas un jour mystérieux !	True, we perceive a distant, mystic light,
. . . . .	. . . . .
Mais nous ne savons pas si cette aube lointaine	But knowledge have not, if those distant gleams
Nous annonce le jour, le vrai soleil ardent ;	Announce the daylight, the sun's glowing beams ;
Car, survenus dans l'ombre à cette heure incertaine,	For darkling hither sent, with doubts oppress'd,
Ce qu'on croit l'orient peut-être l'occident !	What we suppose the east may prove the west.
C'est peut-être le soir qu'on prend pour une aurore !	Perchance 'tis evening that we take for morn ;
Peut-être ce soleil vers qui l'homme est penché,	Perchance that sun, tow'rds which all eyes are bent,
. . . . .	. . . . .
Ce soleil qu'on espère est un soleil couché !	Is set, his glorious light for ever spent !

Yet, soul-chilling as is this answer, the poet did

* Le doute ! mot funèbre et qu'en lettres de flammes	Doubt ! fatal word, in characters of fire
Je vois écrit partout, dans l'aube, dans l'éclair,	Written on all, on lightning, dawn, and air,
Dans l'azur de ce ciel, mysterieux et clair,	Upon the azure sky, mysterious, fair,
Transparent pour les yeux, impénétrable aux âmes !	Clear to the eye, baffling the soul's desire.
C'est notre mal à nous.	This is our general malady.

not despair. He felt the necessity of clinging to the future; he exclaimed, "Perhaps the very coming instant may bring us the solution of the problem."

Esprit de l'homme! attends quelques instants encore	Spirit of man! some moments patient wait,
Ou l'ombre va descendre, ou l'Astre va surgir!	Darkness must fall, or the bright sun must rise!

And I, when after two years of silence I again heard the voice of the poet, when I saw this book, *The Inward Voices*, announced, for an instant I said to myself, that he was perhaps about to reveal the invoked secret; that it was the voice of conscience he would re-echo to us; and that, as a renovated man, he was about to rush, with new energy, upon a yet virgin course. Hope this I did not; but my wish made me believe the thing possible.

In this frame of mind did I take up the volume, and when I read the opening lines:

Le siècle est grand et fort; un noble instinct le mène;	Mighty our age, and nobly 'tis impell'd.
Partout on voit marcher l'Idée en mission;	Thought hastens forward, on high mission sent;
Et le bruit du travail, plein de parole humaine,	And noise of toil, with human language swell'd,
Se mêle au bruit divin de la creation.	Is with creation's sacred noises blent.

In this solemn and austere opening I saw grounds for hope. Alas! I found only verses. The poet's intellect has not advanced a single step. If he has plunged into his own soul, he has there found no-

thing but scepticism!* If he has striven to explore his own thought, he has recoiled, exclaiming—

C'est là l'infirmité de toute notre race.	Behold the malady of all our kind.
De quoi l'homme est-il sûr? qui demeure? qui passe?	What is assured? Who fades? Who stays behind?
Quel est le chimerique et quel est le réel?	What is chimera, what reality?
Quand l'explication viendra-t-elle du ciel?	When comes the explanation from the sky?
. . . . .	. . . . .
Enfants! résignons-nous et suivons notre route.	Children! We must submit and wend our way;
Tout corps traine son ombre, et tout esprit son doute.	Body with shadows, mind with doubts obscures the day.

How happens this? Why this deadly course, the more significant because common to so many living intellects? And whence the professed impotence which is now the cry of almost all poets? These questions appear to me far otherwise important than any mere literary criticism. It is a small matter to know that Victor Hugo is declining, and that his last volume is inferior to his last but one. It is something more to know the wherefore of this decline, the secret of this fall doubly proved; first, by a comparison of the poet's last with his earliest lays; and secondly, by the indifference with which the public now receive the works of the man who was, not ten years since, in respect to popularity and hardihood, the Luther of French literature.

I have said that I wished, without daring to hope it, to see Victor Hugo achieve a real advance in art.

* See the odes, *To Olympio*, *The Evening at Sea*, &c.

I will now explain my reasons, giving, at the same time, an appreciation of the power and the manner of the poet in their generalities. I trust that the degree of abstraction which may characterise my observations will be pardoned. If criticism have higher functions than scanning verses and condemning allocations, it is indispensable to reascend, from time to time, to the first principles of art, as it actually is, as it seems likely to be in future.

Victor Hugo has of late attracted much attention in this country ;* and amongst the estimates of his genius to which this has given birth I have chiefly noticed two : the one in No. iv. of the *London and Westminster Review ;* the other in the *Athenæum* for July 8. But even after these, there remains, I think, something to be said. The first critic, M. Nisard, has not dived below the surface ; upon the *form* he has given us excellent remarks ;—as to essentials, he gets rid of them by affirming that all Victor Hugo's changes flow from an unbridled passion for popularity, which induces him to follow in his lays, now devout, and now sceptical, every, the slightest, shade of variation in public opinion. The second critic, M. Jules Janin, asserts the direct contrary. He upbraids the poet with his constant opposition to public opinion, with the sacrifice of his reputation to an obstinate passion for his own views. The first will allow Victor Hugo nothing more than fancy, the result, he says, of memory. The second

* Written in England.—*Translator.*

seems to allow him something more; and as to his decline, he imputes that to the abandonment, in his latter lays, of his early monarchical and Catholic inspirations and of his first muse, the star of St. Louis. M. Janin is the literary and dramatic critic of the *Journal des Débats*, now in full career of monarchical restoration. The two writers meet upon one point only; to wit, veneration for the *grand siècle* (great age), as they term it, which, whether conscientiously or not, is beginning to be once more the fashion in France. I, for my own part, believe in the independence of Victor Hugo, founding my belief upon his whole literary life. I have not much faith in the "*grand siècle*," still less in the efficacious inspiration of the star of St. Louis. To me, therefore, this question appears still untouched, and I propose adventuring upon it, because I apprehend that its solution will afford an important lesson.

What has Victor Hugo desired to effect?

He has desired to effect a literary revolution; a revolution, not in forms only,—over those, whatever may be said to the contrary, he has triumphed,—but in essentials. He has desired to change both the starting-point and the goal of poetry; and between these two to conquer full liberty as to means. Literature was, generally speaking, material; and his desire, following Madame de Staël and Chateaubriand, was to spiritualise it. All alliance between creeds and literature, between poesy and faith, was

broken; he aspired to reknit that old alliance. This he desired, and proclaimed his desire aloud; saying, in the preface to his *Cromwell,* "The starting-post of religion must ever be the starting-post of poetry. . . . The literature of the present day is the anticipated expression of a religious society . . . . which will doubtless arise, ere long, from amidst so many crumbling old fragments, so many recent ruins." The fall of the empire, what was it in fact but Thought beginning to penetrate the age? our youth experienced analogous wants; Victor Hugo said to them, "I will expound your inmost thoughts, I will be your poet!" and as such he was accepted.

What he needed, therefore, was a religious conception applicable to art. Had he such an one? I know not: but the first thing that struck him, perhaps whilst in search of this desideratum, was, that the universe being cut into two parts, the beings occupying it were similarly divided into two classes; and on the one side poetry was placed, on the other, prose; here the beautiful, there the ugly; whilst whatever was declared ugly was excluded from the domain of art. Thus there were in nature unshapely, irregular, defective types; in society, castes, or individuals condemned to abide without the pale of society, like outlaws, or to wander solitary within it, as victims. Art was not to pollute itself by contact with those types, those doomed ones. This was pretty much the received opinion when Victor Hugo

began his labours. It struck him as a gross injustice, as an imperfect view of art. From that moment he pledged himself within his own soul to achieve a great work of rehabilitation in favour of all these rejected beings, restoring to Poetry one-half the world, which had hitherto been lost to her. To this enterprise he wholly devoted himself. Accordingly, as early as 1827, he said in his preface to *Cromwell*, "Christianity leads Poesy to truth, teaching the modern muse to look upon all things, as she herself does, from on high, and with a more comprehensive *coup d'œil*. Thus the modern muse will feel that everything in creation is not, humanly speaking, beautiful; that the ugly exists there beside the beautiful, the grotesque on the reverse of the sublime, deformity close to grace, evil with good, shade with light. She will ask herself whether the confined and relative reason of the artist can be deemed superior to the infinite, absolute reason of the Creator; whether it is for man to rectify God; whether mutilation can improve the beauty of nature; whether art be authorised to unline—if we may use the word—man, life, creation; . . . . whether, in fine, incompleteness be an element of harmony? Then will poetry take a great, a decisive step; a step which, like the shock of an earthquake, will change the whole face of the intellectual world. The muse will now work like nature. . . behold a new type introduced into poetry—that type is the grotesque. We have now indicated the charac-

teristic feature, the fundamental difference which, in our opinion, separates modern from ancient art, the living form from the dead—romantic from classic literature."

From this moment the whole career of Victor Hugo as a poet, a dramatist, or novelist, has been a varying commentary upon this thought: almost the whole of its strongly-marked portion may be characterised by the one word, *rehabilitation:* rehabilitation of the outlaw in *Hernani;* of the slavish buffoon of a corrupt court in *Le Roi s'amuse;* of the actress in *Angelo;* of physical deformity in *Nôtre Dame;* of guilt, the offspring of the passions and of the times, in *Lucrece Borgia;* of fallen women in *Marion Delorme,* and a number of poems; of the criminal, whatever he may be, in *Les Derniers Jours d'un Condamné.* In all his works some fallen creature is upraised from the mire, now by maternal or paternal love, now by love of a different kind, though almost equally constant and pure; at one time by self-devotion, at another by the enormity of the punishment which society inflicts upon the criminal.

This is a grand and beautiful thought, at once moral and profoundly artistic. There ought, in fact, no more to be Parias for art than for society. Nothing that the world contains ought to be interdicted to art, for this plain reason, that whatever exists is part of the universal order, and this universal order is God himself, the Eternal Source of all poetry. The breath of God is everywhere; to every-

thing he has given an object, a station, a function in the whole. Now, where the thought of God lives, is it possible there should be no poetic element? Art seeks this element in order to disengage and bring it forward. The eye of the poet plunges deep into all objects, in order to surprise, in their inmost recesses, that portion of God's thought which must exist there; a miner in the moral world, he explores its entrails, seeking pure gold in the amalgam that conceals it, the diamond in the mire. He knows that whatever appears to be an exception or an irregularity, appears so only because its proper place in the universal order has not been ascertained; because to condemn at once has been found easier than to study. He knows that there exists not in creation a being so fallen, a heart so perverse, as not to afford one side by which it may be again knit to humanity; one chord capable of vibrating in unison with the good, that is to say, with universal harmony; one aspect under which to appear as appertaining to the beautiful, in other words, to the visible expression of universal harmony. He seeks this aspect, this chord, this side. He aims not at remodelling creation—for that act were impotent—his object is to explain it, to apprehend its life, and translate it in harmony for his auditory. Those who entertain a different idea of art resign themselves to perpetual incompleteness; they fall, inevitably, into the conventional, the arbitrary rule of precepts; and by isolating art, condemn it to perish, sooner or later, of inanition. Art lives

of the world's life; the world's law is art's law; and hence the progressive changes and development of art; which only together with the world can perish.

But even from what I have just said it results that, to the poet who undertakes to realise this view of art, a previous conception of the general order, a deep sense of the universal life and harmony, and the power of so reflecting these upon his works that they who read or listen may elevate themselves to his own level, are indispensable. "Humanly speaking, everything is not beautiful," Victor Hugo himself has somewhere said; "what we call ugly harmonises not with man, but with creation;" and these few words contain the germ of a whole system of ideas. What is not *humanly* beautiful ought to be so *divinely;* what taken singly is not so, may become beautiful in association with other beings; what does not seem so when viewed from below, may appear beautiful when contemplated from above, whence the eye may embrace the whole. Before God all creatures find favour, because he commands them all. He knows their proper places, their objects, their relative value. So, in his humble sphere, does the poet.

In other words, if we would rehabilitate an individuality, man or thing, we must rise above it. From the point of view of the universe only can the real value of things be recognised and appreciated; from the point of view of humanity only can the real value and destinies of man be recognised and appreciated. Man, Humanity, God: such is the triangle in which

the poet who would achieve the task undertaken by Victor Hugo must move.

Now, either I am much mistaken, or Victor Hugo has followed the opposite path; and therefore has he failed.

Victor Hugo has remained the poet of individuality, in the full force of the expression. Never, or hardly ever, has he risen above it; never does he universalise life; never does he attain to a conception of unity. He is a poet of fractions, of analysis, who individualises and isolates whatever he touches; an objective* poet, for ever governed by what is external to himself, ever drawn away from mind to matter, from the idea to the symbol, from the essence to the form.

He selects a general idea, to express. For this purpose he seeks a symbol, a visible image; so far the process is natural. But this image once found,

* The distinction between subjective and objective poets has been stated by M. Nisard in the already-cited article of the *London and Westminster Review*, but in a way that does not accord with my ideas upon the subject. The French critic calls those poets subjective who constantly bring their own personality into play, revealing themselves through their personages; and those objective who follow an opposite course, keeping themselves out of sight. I look elsewhere for the sense of these words. In my estimation the objective poet is he who receives and transmits external impressions as they light upon him, without continuity, without forming any link between them, without knitting them all to one unitary idea; the subjective poet, he who stamps upon the external phenomenal world the unity which he finds in his own heart or conscience. The first is passive, the second active; the first reproduces all the manifestations of life, as though independent of each other; the other considers them only as varied expressions of one single thought, as applications of one general law according to a diversified scale. In M. Nisard's sense of the words, Voltaire and Victor Hugo are subjective writers: I do not esteem them such.

he forgets the idea. He falls at the feet of the image; he studies it, he minutely analyses all its beauties; he invests it arbitrarily with all those in which it is deficient; he works it in detail, polishing and caressing it in a thousand ways. Gradually he becomes enamoured of it; then, as if influenced by the jealous feeling of exclusive possession, he isolates it. And now he entirely forgets how he came by this image, he forgets what it was designed to represent; he rises not above, but circles round and round it. He denies the God and turns idolater. His labour has thenceforth no object beyond that of individualising this child of his adoption. He imprisons the idea in this beloved form; he smothers the thought under the symbol. When he has done this,—when like the heathen he has dragged down divinity from heaven and bound it to the earth—he seeks how to make it compensation for the loss. He has robbed his idea of one world, the world of mind; he offers in lieu thereof another, that of matter. Lest the chill of indifference should seize those whom he summons to admire his beautiful but fallen goddess, lest she should experience a moment's neglect or oblivion, he exhausts the material resources of art, he accumulates contrasts around her, he stimulates the senses by exhibiting all the accessory external ornaments upon which he can lay his hand; and when his matter fails him, he takes refuge in style and expression. There he is really at his ease: alternately simple, cutting, stinging, or figurative; he allures, dazzles,

fascinates; he makes his auditors forget the principal amidst the incidents; he bewilders them that they may not perceive the void of which he himself is conscious. And yet even in his style, as in all the rest, he follows the same tendency, and delights in the same process. He individualises and materialises. Would he paint envy? He will tell you of somebody who gnashes his teeth in the dark. Is it a sacred sorrow? He will nail it upon the cross of Christ. Thus is it always with him. The reader may be referred for a specimen to the *Feu du Ciel,* and *Navarrino* in the *Orientales.* Even amongst his dramas examples may be found; as, for instance, *Angelo,* which is written throughout in this manner.

This play may answer well to enable me to explain what I have just said, and to show the consequences of the course described. *Angelo* is a drama of rehabilitation. The poet's object was to dignify by love and self-devotion a class of women always misappreciated and outraged; of whom the majority have sunk into degradation, but have done so because society plunged them into it by stigmatising them beforehand—namely, actresses. He accordingly sought a symbol for his idea, a personage who might represent all these women in their best qualities; this is his Thisbe. Now, in order that the drama might attain its object, the problem to be resolved was the following: so to situate and develop this Thisbe, to make her so act, speak, and feel, as, without injuring

her dramatic individuality, to enable us to rise from herself to her class; to introduce into that individuality a something appertaining to all who live in the same sphere; to work out the character, in short, as a creation destined to be a means, not an end, a vehicle of thought. Is this impossible? No. And —for I need not here cite the masters of the art— another living poet of France, endowed, not with higher powers, but with more chastity and simplicity, Alfred de Vigny, was even then solving the problem in his *Chatterton*, a fine drama, too little appreciated here and elsewhere. By never aiming at strong effects, by never seeking to astonish, by penetrating himself deeply with that thought of rehabilitation which he likewise desired to express, by being himself the first to believe in it, he succeeded in so sketching the outlines of his poet that even whilst we recognise the "poor, eighteen-year-old spirit," driven to suicide by the disdain of his contemporaries, every one can at every instant catch some family feature characterising slighted genius in all times and all countries.

Victor Hugo, after throwing into the first scenes some touches of this general truth, was overpowered by his mania for individualising to the utmost whatsoever he touches; and he has here so effectually indulged it, that before the close of the drama his Thisbe has completely superseded the actress. He has become so thoroughly enamoured of his own conception as to have forgotten all that he had pro-

posed to himself, all that he had announced in his preface. He has given to this Thisbe manners, feelings, and habits so personal; he has placed her in a circle of events so strange, so exceptional; he has associated her with, and influenced her by, personages so extraordinary, so different from those who possess real existence; in a word, he has so completely severed from her class this being who was to idealise and embody their misfortunes and their rights, that it is impossible to recollect them. It is over Thisbe, the child of the poet's imagination, that we weep, if indeed any one does weep. As to raising in our esteem all those women who resemble her, and suffer like her under the social stigma—why think of that? What women resemble Thisbe? what misfortunes resemble hers?

I have not leisure here to analyse completely any of Victor Hugo's poems. But let the reader open any one of his collections, *Les Feuilles d'Automne* excepted, and peruse the first piece that offers. An attentive examination, guided by the notions here thrown out, will show the idea fettered, bound down by the form which it ought to govern,—the mind in some sort absorbed by matter, which matter it ought to seize upon, pervade at every pore, and shine through brilliantly, like flame through alabaster,—it will show how Victor Hugo appears to me always to descend from the deity to the symbol, instead of rising, as I conceive poetry always should, from the symbol to the deity.

If this be the prevalent habit of Victor Hugo, if it be the characteristic of his poetry, dominant over all his conceptions, it is evident what must be the result in the poet's mind as relates to man, to his business on earth, and to God. Never generalise; never embrace life in its universality, or man in his functions relative to humanity; contemplate the former only in its several isolated manifestations, and in the latter seek only his individuality:—and thus place man in presence of God. What feeling can you educe, if not a feeling of weakness, of absolute impotence? What destiny can be imagined as the lot of the human creature upon earth, if not a destiny of resignation and inaction? immensity crushes the individual. The finite contending with the infinite can engender nothing but doubt and scepticism for the strong, for those that wrestle,—nothing for the feeble but blind submission, the passive resignation of the East.

Now all this is to be found in the poetry of Victor Hugo. Humanity plays no part in his verses. Of the three points of the triangle he retains only two; *i.e.*, God and man. The intervening step, which alone could bring the one nearer to the other, being thus suppressed, nothing is left to man but the consciousness of his inability ever to attain to the infinite object of his desires. He sinks into lethargy, faintheartedness and insuperable ignorance; the noise of events oppresses him; life appears to him as an inexplicable enigma, as a development of aimless activity

Helas! helas! tout travaille
Sous tes yeux ô Jéhovah!
De quelque côté qu'on aille,
Partout un flot qui tressaille,
Partout un homme qui va!
Ou vas-tu?—Vers la nuit noire.

Ou vas-tu?—Vers le grand jour.

Toi?—Je cherche s'il faut croire.

Et toi?—Je vais à la gloire.
Et toi?—Je vais à l'amour.

Vous allez tous à la tombe!

Vous allez à l'inconnu!

Aigle, vautour, ou colombe,
Vous allez où tout retombe
Et d'ou rien n'est revenu!
Voix Intérieures, xvii.

Alas! alas! 'Tis labour all,
Jehovah, underneath thine eye;
And wheresoe'er our footsteps fall,
Are quivering billows that appal
Men hurrying onward eagerly.
Where goest thou?—Tow'rds darksome night.

Where goest thou?—Tow'rds light-some day.

And thou?—I seek what creed is right.

And thou?—I follow glory bright.
And thou?—I go where love bears sway.

Ye are all hast'ning to the tomb,

All going to th' unknown, the fear'd.

Dove, eagle, all by certain doom
Seek the devouring gulf of gloom,
Whence nothing ever reappear'd.
Voix Intérieures, xvii. *Soirée en Mer.*

Ask not of Victor Hugo and his lays an increase of energy wherewith to strive against the evil existing in the world. Ask not of him advice respecting the path you must follow to arrive at truth. Ask not of him even consolation amidst your sufferings. He has nothing of the kind to give. His words are cold, fleshless, desolate; at times even imbued with a bitterness quite incomprehensible in a poet who has so often been called religious.

Cet ordre auquel tu t' opposes
T'enveloppe et t'engloutit.

Mortel, plains-toi, si tu l'oses;
Au Dieu qui fit ces deux choses
Le ciel grand, l'homme petit!

Into that Order, which in vain
Ye strive against, ye're swallow'd all;

Fond mortals, if ye dare, complain
To God, who fashion'd for his reign
The heavens so great, and man so small!

Chacun, qu'il doute ou qu'il nie,	Each one toils onward struggligly,
Lutte en frayant son chemin ;	Whether he doubt, deny, or trust ;
Et l'éternelle harmonie	And th' everlasting-harmony
Pèse comme une ironie	Weighs like a bitter mockery
Sur tout ce tumulte humain !	On human tumult, human dust.

Idem.

Is this religion ? Can this be the true God, the God whom we all seek—this terrible, mysterious, inaccessible God who seems to sport with his human work, who so fearfully resembles the pagan *Fate ?* Can we adore God whilst despising his creature ? Can we love him whilst knowing of him only his power ? How, then, does he manifest himself in this world of ours (which also is his thought), if all be error, doubt, and darkness ?* Has life been given to us as—

> " A tale . . .
> Told by an idiot,
> Signifying nothing ?"

Or as a mission of useful works, of progressive perfectibility, to be discharged, as the means of approximation to God himself ? Would God have placed us here below had we not been designed to achieve something in this world ; in a word, to act ? And do not human actions hence acquire a high value, as

* La certitude—helas ! insensés que nous sommes	Alas ! 'tis frenzy to believe we know
De croire à l'œil humain !—	Aught human eye has scann'd !
Ne séjourne pas plus dans la raison des hommes	Certainty dwells in mind of man even so
Que l'onde dans leur main.	As water in his hand.
Elle mouille un moment, puis s'écoule infidèle,	It moistens—then with faithlessness accurst

the only means we possess of elevating ourselves towards God? Wherefore, then, incessantly endeavour to blight them by your scorn? Why despise what God himself does not despise, since it is by our actions that he judges whether we deviate from or strive to follow his law? Can you not magnify the Creator without outraging his creature? Can you not speak of God without trembling? For you tremble whenever you name him, and we imbibe from your lays a terror of infinity which enervates us, mutilates our faculties and arrests us in the midst of our finest bursts of self-devotion, of our holiest hopes. You recoil with a cry of terror from the invisible, because in its depths you have caught a glimpse of eternity (*Feuilles d'Automne*, xxix.); you fear the grave (*Ib.* vi.-xiii. xiv., etc.); you fear oblivion. Have you then no immortality within yourself? Is not this existence, for you as it is for us, a mere episode in the soul's life? What matters it to you though the man who has emitted a great idea should, in his turn, be obliterated? Does he not live on in that very idea which nothing can obliterate? Does he not live

Sans que l'homme, ô douleur!
Puisse désalterer à ce qui reste d'elle
Ses lèvres ou son cœur!
L'apparence de tout nous trompe et nous fascine.
Est-il jour? est il nuit?
Rien d'absolu. Tout fruit contient une racine,
Toute racine un fruit.

Escapes from every part;
And man, with what remains, can quench no thirst
Either of lip or heart!
Appearances around us flit and shoot;
Is't day? Is't night? Aread!
Naught's absolute! Each seed contains a root,
Each root contains a seed.

A Olympio.

in the spark of good, in the fraction of perfectibility, which he has, by this idea, introduced into the hearts of his brethren? Has he not fulfilled his mission by contributing his share towards the fecundation of that flower of humanity which is to blossom in God? Tell us something of his future prospects. Tell us the futurity of the martyr; tell us what every drop of blood, every tear shed for the good of mankind, weighs in the balance of humanity's destinies. We are already so little disposed to self-devotion; our only great faculties, those of enthusiasm, of self-sacrifice, of love, of poetry, are already so feeble, so chilled by the wind of egotism blowing from without; and you come to freeze them yet more, impelling them to dash themselves, on the one side against a tomb, on the other against a heaven of brass, closed alike against faith and intellect! Poet, is this your ministry? Is it thus you think to accomplish a work of rehabilitation?

This is what souls endowed with a genuine sense of religion, whatever be their number at the present day, are entitled to ask of Victor Hugo. This is also, as I believe, the secret of the indifference which, as well in France as elsewhere, has succeeded to the enthusiasm once excited by every lay of the poet. It is not, as one of his critics appears to insinuate, because Victor Hugo has deserted Aristotle and Boileau, and revolted from the *great age*, that the public has in its turn deserted him: it is because he has not kept his promises; because he

said, "I will remake art; I will renew its alliance with spirituality and religion;" and, instead of fulfilling his programme, has merely battered down the older art: then, when he was expected to rebuild, has fallen back either into extinguished creeds or into scepticism; because he has subjected art to the worship of sensation, has sacrificed to materialism, and made himself, in some sort, a heathen poet. And herein he is behind his age; for the age, amidst all its egotism and its theories of self-interest, is nevertheless actuated by spiritual instincts, is tormented with a sense of its want of belief, and of social belief, which, despite all efforts at counteraction, must augment from day to day, and will imperatively claim a solution which the poetry of Victor Hugo is incapable of supplying.

And, after all, is not this new theory of art for art's sake, in which M. Victor Hugo's loftier views have ended, which he has frequently advanced as an axiom, and almost always practised in his compositions, a compromise with the times of materialism, of literary paganism? Does not this theory involve the negation of a permanent social object, the negation of a universal life and unity; and, in the application of pure individualism to art, the death of all faith, of all acknowledged law of progression? The first, the only, the real fall of M. Victor Hugo was the development of this, now irrevocable, tendency to stagnate in individuality; to base all poetry upon the human *Ego*, whilst the epoch requires more.

Hence his terrors and his doubts. Hence his disposition to look down upon all that is human, to supersede as far as possible in his works the man by the thing, the artist by the monument, the intelligent being by the first abstract idea,—antiquity, annihilation, or any other that offers. Hence, also, when he is compelled, whether by circumstances or by the real splendour of an action, to celebrate man, he can find only a brilliant, but unsubstantial and selfish, crown to allot him: to wit, *glory*; glory to Napoleon, glory to the July martyrs.* Hence, when he speaks of suicide (*Chants du Crépuscule*, xiii.), he cannot find a single consolatory expression for the suffering spirit that is almost ready to desert its post; not one word of duty; not one tone to reprobate the egotism of dying to escape from sorrow, whilst the age offers so many ways of both living and dying for others. "A hazardous problem," says he; "obscure questions, meditating upon which the poet is "driven to wander the livelong night through the streets of Paris." Doubt therefore —always doubt. And man must indeed always appear enveloped in doubt so long as he is not con-

* La gloire est le but où j'aspire;
On n'y va point par le bonheur.
Le Poete dans les Révolutions, Odes et Balades.

It is to glory I aspire,
Never through happiness attained.

Chaque jour pour eux seuls se levant plus fidèle,
La gloire, aube toujours nouvelle,
Fait luire leur memoire e redore leurs noms!
Aux Morts de Juillet.

Rising each day, for them alone more true,
Glory, a day-spring ever new,
Shines on their memory, regilds their names.
To the Victims of July.

templated from the point of view of humanity. From the species only can the law governing the individual be learned. Only by taking the idea of man's mission here upon earth as our starting-point, are religion, philosophy, or poetry at the present day possible.

An objective poet, a poet of sensations and analysis, Victor Hugo paints nature such as he sees her, presenting her beauties one by one, minutely, accurately, as if reflected in a mirror. But—with some few exceptions, as, *e.g.*, v. and xxxviii. *Feuilles d'Automne*—ask not of him to seek in her anything beyond forms. Never does it occur to him to look deeper for the sense of those forms, for the harmony that must needs exist between man and nature; never to contemplate the latter as *the drapery of eternal thought*, to borrow Herder's expression. Thus his pictures are seldom more than fine copies. Imitation of nature is as much his school as that of those *classicist* poets against whom he so vehemently battles. In his verses the whole material universe appears only a horizon, *formed to our wish*, as Fenelon said, *for the delight of our eyes.*

As the poet of individuality, wanting an unitary, universal conception, unable to become either an educator or a prophet of the future, Victor Hugo reflects without embellishing, and repeats without explaining; he follows the course of events, but never directs or foresees them. In his *Autumnal*

Leaves, he has said that love, the tomb, life, glory, the wave, the sunbeam, and breath alike and successively make his *crystal soul* sparkle and vibrate. Again, in the prelude to the *Lays of Twilight*, he avers,—

Le poète, en ses chants où l'amertume abonde,	The bard, in lays with bitter feelings fraught,
Reflétait, écho triste et calm cependant,	Echoed his tones, while grief, yet calmness, mark
Tout ce que l'âme rêve et tout ce que le monde	All the soul dreams, all that the world e'er thought,
Chante, bégaie ou dit dans l'ombre en l'attendant !	Sang, stammer'd, said, whilst waiting in the dark.

This is indeed M. Victor Hugo's poetry, painted with a single stroke; his muse *is waiting* in the *dark*.

It is not in a period of transition, like ours, characterised by an immense disproportion betwixt the soul's wants and reality; it is not in times when all things—war and peace, sorrow and joy, earth and heaven, speak of the future,—when every living being asks himself, "Whither are we going? What is to become of us?" that poetry, living upon disdain and insulation, or waiting tremblingly in the dark, can aspire to the honours of lasting celebrity, of lasting influence over men. In these days we set the poet a larger task. We exact of him that he should either guide us, or that he should modestly withdraw into obscurity. These last forty or fifty years have left around us a great void of creeds, of virtues, and of poetry. A very fatal divorce has taken place between genius and the public. The heart of the for-

mer is no longer full of faith, of love for the latter; nor has the latter respect for, or sympathy with, the former. Calculation, analysis, and the spirit of prose overflow; they have already almost drowned the poetic element; they threaten to stifle the holy devotion, the holy enthusiasm that form the pinions upon which the human soul rises towards God. There is nothing in all this to astonish the man who can extricate himself from actual existence to take more comprehensive views, especially if he think less of his sufferings than of his duties. This state of society, which is not new in the history of the world, which must recur as often as a great work of destruction shall have been accomplished, and a great work of renovation shall be upon the eve of accomplishment, is an additional proof of what I say. But so long as this state subsists, the poet's is a solemn mission; the more so, because, through the slow operation of centuries, his voice is, at the present day, heard, not by his countrymen alone, but by all nations.

Now, if art would re-establish its influence, its fallen worship, it must burst forth from this state of anarchy or of indifference to the great things acting, or about to be acted, in the world; it must no longer withdraw to one side, but stand in the centre, swaying the heart of the social impulse. Art must no longer simply reflect reality without addition or modification, must no longer merely count the wounds affronting its eye; art must now whilst sounding

those wounds with fearless hand, do that which shall determine men to heal them. Art must not say, "All is evil," and sink into dispair; for well has Jean Paul declared, "Despair is the true atheism." Art must say, "There is evil here," and still must hope. Art must not, either in misanthropy or in the prudery of virtue, shun the fallen and corrupt creature; but accost it mercifully and devotedly, endeavouring to raise and purify it by a breath of innocence, of religion, and of poetry, and by revelations concerning its origin, its terrestrial lot, and its futurity. Whilst pointing out to man the arena assigned to his labour, art must teach him, not his weakness, but his strength; must inspire him, not with faint-heartedness, but with energy and a vigorous will. Are we in the desert? Are our steps in danger of being bewildered amidst the night of scepticism? Then be art our pillar of fire, guiding us to our promised land! We shall be found true believers, submissive and grateful.

But in order to be all this, must art undergo a complete revolution? Must the point of view, the starting-post and the goal, be all simultaneously changed? Have we reached the point when, one epoch of art being exhausted, it must undergo a metamorphosis, or perish? Can all that has been done in literature during the third of a century which has just elapsed, all that we judged to be revolution, have been a mere work of reform, a return to independence, to literary freedom, opening the way, but leaving everything still to be done? Can this chance

to be the secret of the despondence into which all the poets of the era in question finally sink, when they discover that, though powerful to destroy, they are impotent to construct; and of the scepticism of a generation that has not found in them the promised realisation of hope?

For the present I do no more than throw out these questions. They appear to me important in reference to the future prospects of art, and I would fain recommend them to the attention of our poets. For myself, I pause here, but not without a purpose of hereafter recurring to this subject. I have, as far as in me lies, established the fact, that the head of the Romantic school in France has broken his promises, and has found himself unable to fill up his programme; and I have further endeavoured to discover and establish the process which he has, almost always, adopted in his compositions. Hereafter I may possibly submit to a similar investigation those of his contemporary poets who, like him, represent a tendency, a school, a system in the history of art. And if it should appear that, by a coincidence hitherto perhaps too little noticed, on the one hand, all these poets have arrived by different roads at the same sense of impotence; while on the other, all have, under varied forms, followed a process essentially similar to Victor Hugo's,—that all their conceptions present only a series of successive and separate manifestations of human life, individualised in all its thoughts and acts, in all its phenomena, taken insulatedly, one by one,

scarcely ever in their unity,—never in their relations of harmony and destination according to the universal harmony, that is to say, to the divine conception, which is the foundation of the whole;—in a word, that all their poetry has never passed the bounds of the sphere of individuality;—it will justify me in drawing inferences which will decisively solve the problem stated a few lines back.

ON THE POEMS OF LAMARTINE.

(First published in the *British and Foreign Review*, 1839.)

WHEN in my investigation of M. Victor Hugo's *Voix Intérieures* I noticed the fact of the poet's gradual decline, and indicated the causes which, in my opinion, had necessarily produced it, I added, that an attentive study of all those poets who represent a peculiar tendency in the history of contemporary art would perhaps disclose in all of them, through every diversity of form, the existence of the same organic vice, and, in consequence, the necessity of all ending in the same result—impotence to attain the object which their efforts appear to pursue. I did not then believe that M. de Lamartine would so speedily have furnished a new proof of what I advanced. The *Harmonies*, the *Voyage en Orient* ("Oriental Travels"),

and *Jocelyn*, discovered indeed the fatal tendency. I had felt a sort of terror when I heard the poet of vague aspirings, of soft regrets, of the soul's fugitive thoughts, announce his purpose of giving us an *epopœia*, the Epopœia of Humanity, of which *Jocelyn* (some ten or twelve thousand lines) was but an episode; I knew that M. de Lamartine must break down in the trial. The poetic talent of the author of the *Méditations*,—brilliant undoubtedly, but somewhat of the improvisatore character; fruitful, but in a confined sphere,—did not appear adequate to the vast proportions of the epic. His creeds, philosophic and religious, were not, in my opinion, sufficiently determinate or sufficiently complete for what he was undertaking; and I could not believe that it was reserved for him who had written,—

Notre crime est d'être homme et de vouloir connaître;	Our crime, that being men, we strive to know;
Ignorer et servir c'est la loi de notre être (*Méditations; à Lord Byron*);	To serve in ignorance is man's law below;

to teach us, "the destiny of humanity, and the phases through which the human mind must pass to attain to its ends by the ways of God" (preface to *Jocelyn*). But I hoped that, drawn off by his political occupations, warned by a poet's instinct, by his friends, and by the voices of a few conscientious critics, M. de Lamartine would have paused betimes in the perilous career in which he had inconsiderately adventured. This has not been the case. Since *Jocelyn*, another

episode, *La Chute d'un Ange*, has appeared to proclaim his persistence. A third episode, *Les Pêcheurs*, is promised us. It is decidedly an *epopœia* that we are thus receiving in fragments, an *epopœia* gigantic in its dimensions as the *Mahabharata;* an *epopœia* which it will require perhaps a year to read through with due reflection, yet which is intended to constitute a part of our national education,—when we shall have a national education,—since it is, as the author somewhere tells us, "to supply an aliment that may nourish the world and give it a century of rejuvenescence." The critic's part is thenceforth changed with respect to M. de Lamartine. Severity towards him is not only a right—glad at heart were I to resign it,—it has become a duty. The question is no longer whether his verses excite us or melt us to tears, but what these tears teach us, whither that excitement leads. It is a work eminently moral and social in its aim that the poet undertakes, and from a social and moral point of view must it be judged. This ground, which indeed I conceive to be, at this time, the only one suited to the useful appreciation of contemporary productions, was not chosen by me; it was he himself who summoned us thither. Thus I have not to fear the imputation of intolerance, of a desire to tyrannise, in virtue of preconceived notions of my own, over the poet's liberty. To no one is the poet's liberty more sacred than to me; but I can no more confound liberty with anarchy than toleration with indifference. In literature, as in politics, as in all

things, liberty is not the right of doing whatever a man pleases that does not encroach on the right of others; it is the right of freely choosing the means by which to attain to the rational and virtuous goal which he has freely prescribed to himself. I would not fetter intellect, nor seek to subject it to arbitrary codes; but, when I deem it necessary, declare, "Your means are not consonant with your end." When M. de Lamartine talks sadness to us, and, as though terrified at his solitude, prays us to moan with him, I reproach him not,—no, not even when his sadness appears to me to dispose those who partake in it to inaction. I deplore the actual constitution of things that condemns privileged souls to sadness; but I sympathise with him, and listen with deep attention to his confidential revelations: the fifth of his *Harmonies* (*La Source dans le Bois*), although sad and depressing, I think admirable, as are many of the *Meditations*. But when he assumes the position of the religious poet—when he says to us, "I know the malady of mankind; it is my own, and I come to cure it,"—when he talks to us of faith, of knowledge of the destinies of humanity,—if, after listening to him, I feel my wounds festering, and consciousness of my own impotence stealing into my soul with his lays, and scepticism, with the icy wind from his wings, driving away hope;—I feel myself entitled to say to him, "You are mistaken; the secret of cure lies not there." Now this is precisely the position of the critic relatively to M. de Lamartine. He has professed

himself a religious poet, and been generally accepted as such. His books are reprinted every New Year as keepsakes, as family presents; they are those which French mothers are best pleased to see in the hands of their young children. Is this well or ill? Does his poetry contain the aliment required by the epoch? To me the inquiry appears important.

In a literary point of view, one fact is henceforward established which deserves attention;—this is a decline, a decline decided and striking as that of Victor Hugo, which has been pretty generally felt and recorded by the French press, and which would have met with still less leniency if, like Victor Hugo, M. de Lamartine had preached a theory, founded a literary sect, and warred against criticism. There is a decline in M. de Lamartine's last poem in respect of the form and the poetic accessories, a decline in respect of the substance of that which constitutes the life and essence of poetry. The first is serious, but may with ease be subsequently repaired; the second is much more so, and what is worse, from it there is far less chance of the poet's recovering himself. Faults of style that must be owned striking, images spoiled or repeated even to monotony, incorrectness of language and rhythm carried to a pitch that it were difficult to believe; in a word, all the several imperfections upon which the French press has chiefly dwelt, are undoubtedly important blemishes, but such as a wise deliberation, a deeper conscientiousness brought to bear upon his work, might easily correct.

A want of artistic conscientiousness and of respect for the public is evinced in the attempt to write an *epopœia* extempore; but a hope may be entertained that the severity of the judgments pronounced upon his composition may recall M. de Lamartine to himself; and in order to be a pure and elegant writer, he need only resolve to be so. Can we say as much of those faults which affect the very essence of the poetry, and, as it were, establish the fact of a second manner in the author? Can we, when in "The Angel's Fall" we find the worship of the form substituted for the adoration of the idea, matter predominant over mind, and the colouring of the Venetian painters supplanting the spirituality of the school of Umbria, suppose all this a mere digression of the poet? Are we not rather,—recollecting Victor Hugo and so many other poets of the last thirty years, who, having like him begun their career with innovation, spiritualism, and a religious tendency, have ended in a similar downfall,—led to suspect in M. de Lamartine's poetry, as in theirs, the existence of some radical vice, which must of necessity gradually develope itself, thus impoverishing and deteriorating faculties incontestably brilliant? And should this vice prove to be not of a poetic but of a philosophic nature, an inaccurate perception of the wants and of the vocation of the epoch, an imperfect conception of universal life, of the thought of God in the world, should we not have gained an additional step towards certainty concerning the intimate connection between

poetry and philosophy? Should we not, in some sort, have won a compensation for the regret occasioned us by the fall of M. de Lamartine, in thus establishing the impossibility of the existence of high poetry, at this time of day, without a reflective comprehension of the progress of humanity, without the identification of the poet with the thought now fermenting in the breast of the masses, and impelling them to action? I know many persons who call these speculations Mysticism. Mysticism has to me no meaning: in respect of criticism, I know only the *true* and the *false;* but if by Mysticism be meant, very erroneously, inapplicable and useless abstraction, that is precisely what I most oppose when I seek to lead criticism to this ground. It is because I am weary of a criticism of commas and syllables—which produces nothing, which throws not a single new idea into circulation—that I seek another course, more akin to the principles that generate great social realities. I know that philosophic criticism, that is to say, that literary education, preceded the unfolding of that flower of German poetry upon which we all, poets and critics alike, still live; and I do not see that the materialist criticism, with all its anatomy of details, to which such objectors would confine us, has hitherto contributed to produce the blossoming of much poetic genius around us.

La Chute d'un Ange has nothing in common with those compositions which the first verses of the sixth chapter of Genesis suggested to Byron and

Moore; nor yet with that delicious little poem of Alfred de Vigny, *Eloa*, which I would fain see translated into English, could a translation preserve that chaste suavity of expression in which lies its principal charm. M. de Lamartine's angel likewise falls through love; but that is the only point of contact. The idea of the poem is more comprehensive, more philosophic. The angel is here the personification of the human soul. The human soul, and the successive phases through which God has decreed that it must achieve its destiny of perfectibility —that is the subject of the grand *epopœia* of which the poem here noticed is but a part, the second, perhaps, of the twelve or fourteen that, as is reported, are to compose the work. This is, then, one of the first pages of the history of moral man, written from the point of view of the Christian dogma of the Fall. He who relates the tale to the poet is an old man of the Maronite tribe, for which M. de Lamartine in his oriental travels discovered so much sympathy, domiciliated on the summit of Lebanon,—a mysterious being, of whom no one can tell the age, and who *sait des choses étranges, sur l'enfance du temps, sur l'homme, et sur les anges.* *

The tale is divided into visions, which it would be too long to analyse minutely, but of which we shall give a rapid summary.

The time is antediluvian. It is night, a magnificent night; a tribe of shepherds has just withdrawn

* Who knows strange things of the infancy of time, of men, and of angels.

into the shade, and to the sound of human footsteps succeeds the concert that night offers to the Lord. The thousand voices of nature blend in divine harmony; the cedars of Lebanon chant a hymn of adoration. Angels, poised here and there upon their wings, listen with devout attention; gradually they soar upwards and disappear, one alone remaining; it is Cedar, the enamoured angel. He is absorbed in the contemplation of a child of twelve years old, Doïdha, asleep under one of the cedars. Her beauty troubles him; a thought of human love murmurs through his being, and he says within himself, Why are the angels solitary? Suddenly steps are heard; seven giants appear; they are the slave purveyors of Balbek. Doïdha awakes to find herself their prisoner; they fling a net over her, as over a wild beast, and are preparing to carry her off. It is at this moment that the fall of the Angel is decided; an immense, an omnipotent desire transforms his whole being; he precipitates himself headlong to the defence of Doïdha; he is *man*. He slays the robbers: for one instant he is happy at the feet of this child, the object of his love, whom he has just saved; but even at the awful moment when the change of his nature was consummated a cry had resounded in his soul—

Tombe, tombe à jamais, creature éclipsée !	Fall ! fall ! Creature eclipsed, for ever fall !
Perisse ta splendeur	Perish thy splendour ! . . .
Tant que tu n'auras pas racheté goutte à goutte	Till drop by drop thou have redeem'd with cost
Cette immortalité qu 'une femme te coûte !	Thine immortality, for woman lost.

The doom is spoken, and its fulfilment is pursued throughout the poem.

The men of the tribe of Phayz, to which Doïdha belongs, now arrive. They question her deliverer: Cedar cannot answer; language has not been revealed to him. This nocturnal conflict, these strange corpses, this dumb unknown—a giant in strength, are to the suspicious tribe terrifying mysteries. A law condemns every stranger to death; but Cedar is so handsome, and has saved Doïdha—in his favour death is commuted for slavery. Delivered up to Phayz, he herds his cattle, and performs the most servile offices: but Doïdha is there, every day he beholds her; she it is who, amidst the recesses of the woods, brings him the food of slaves, and that moment repays his long day of degradation. Little by little these moments are prolonged; his passion is no longer solitary—Doïdha shares it. Then begins the education of love. She teaches him to speak: a whole world bursts upon him with language; his vague gleams of intelligence become thoughts, ideas; the instincts of the heart become sentiments. All this is beautiful, sometimes enchanting. Meanwhile their love is discovered: it is more than a crime in the eyes of the tribe. Persecution begins, but love triumphs. Separated by violence, they meet in secret, they marry, and Doïdha gives birth to twins; it is Cedar who conceals them, who watches over them; it is a gazelle that rears them with her milk. Long—too long perhaps for pro-

bability—does mystery protect their union, which accident at length betrays. Doïdha rescues her infants from the river into which they had been flung, but is herself immured in a tower, built of stones piled up on each other, there to die of hunger. Cedar, bound and corded, is thrown into the Orontes; he escapes nevertheless, and returning wild with rage, demolishes the tower, crushes the people of the tribe with its ruins, flies with the mother and the children, and plunges into solitude.

Here they live awhile; but one day, as the twins repose in a sort of cradle formed of the boughs of a tree, an eagle, swooping down, seizes and carries them to the summit of a rock. The parents climb the rock, and find, not the blood-stained eyry of a bird of prey, but a grotto, the abode of a sainted old man, to whom the eagle is a companion and messenger. This excellent person, born a slave of the Titans, had received from his mother a revelation of the true God, of Jehovah, and the *primitive book*. Compelled to fly whilst he was propagating its doctrines amongst his fellow-slaves, he continues to fulfil his mission from the peak of his rock; he inscribes the pages of the book upon brass plates, which the eagle carries afar off, and drops, as from the skies, upon the crowd. Doïdha and Cedar receive his instructions; they listen to fragments of the *primitive book*; their days elapse in blissful innocence, when suddenly an aërial bark, the description of which is tolerably anti-scientific, furrows the air and descends

upon the rock. From this three giants alight, who kill the old man, carry off the young couple and their children, and convey them to Babel, to the feet of king Nemphed. The king orders Doïdha to be reserved for his royal pleasures, and with respect to Cedar, he orders—

Qu'on prépare son corps avec précaution
A subir des muets la mutilation.

"With caution due his body to prepare
The mutilation of the Mutes to share."

We have reached the Tenth vision. Babel—its giants who reign in virtue of *right divine*—its enslaved, brutalised multitude that reveres them as gods—its orgies, infamous in sensuality, disgusting and stupid in ferocity, fill two visions, from which analysis recoils. In the Twelfth we find Lakini, the favourite of king Nemphed, in love with Cedar, and Asrafiel, one of his Titans, dreaming of the throne and Doïdha. Through these two beings the catastrophe is brought about. Lakini, stealing from the finger of her sleeping master the ring, the sight of which commands obedience, visits Cedar in his prison, and being repulsed in her love, endeavours to seduce him by a show of virtue and devotedness; she even engages, upon being urged, to restore to him Doïdha. Meanwhile Nemphed, suspecting the designs of Asrafiel, has just ordered Lakini to kill him; she hastens to impart her commission to Asrafiel, who employs himself in preparing a revolution in the palace, of which Lakini is to give the signal by murdering Nemphed himself. In the interval she lays her own plans. She

hurries to Doïdha, and obtains possession of her luxuriant tresses, by persuading the poor mother that they are to protect her babes from the cold: she hurries to Cedar, and informs him that he shall be released that very night; his prison-door will be opened, he will go forth, a veiled slave will place Doïdha in his hands, when he must, without *addressing a single word to her*, carry her off in his arms and fly in a given direction; she will meet him at the foot of a sycamore, and bring him his children. Night arrives. Lakini kills Nemphed with a poisoned dart that she holds between her teeth and stabs into his temple as she kisses him. She disappears amidst the tumult. Cedar steals from his prison; a woman is delivered to him, and he carries her away, keeping his promise; it is the utmost if he breathes a hasty kiss upon the tresses of Doïdha, which the breeze wafts to his lips; but upon reaching the sycamore, he gives way to his passion—still without breaking his promised silence—and falls asleep amidst tender caresses. The first ray of the morning awakens him, and destroys his illusion; it is not his wife, but Lakini whom he has so fondly clasped to his heart. Furiously he spurns her into the river that flows beside them, returns to the city and excites the people to insurrection. He appeals to the *adepts* of the Old Man of the Rock, and they, rising in crowds, rush upon his footsteps to the palace of the Titans. Cedar arrives at the very moment when Doïdha, threatened with the immediate murder of her children, is sinking

in despair into the arms of Asrafiel. Him Cedar slays, and prepares, with all that is dear to him upon earth, to quit the town, which the insurgents, abusing their victory, then pollute with a thousand atrocities. He pauses for an instant, to comply with the prayer of a Titan, who, having escaped from the tower in which they have shut themselves up, offers, if permitted to accompany the fugitives, to guide them to a land where the children of Jehovah reign: they all depart together, and plunge into the desert. It is there that Cedar, on awaking one morning, finds himself alone, abandoned by the treacherous guide, in the midst of burning sands, without landmarks and without a drop of water. The children die; Doïdha dies. Cedar, amidst imprecations, raises a pile of wood, ascends and sets it on fire; and above the flames, from the bosom of the tempest, the voice of a Spirit, that voice which had resounded in his soul at the moment of his fall, is heard:

Va! descends, criait-il, toi qui voulus descendre!
Mesure, esprit tombé, ta chute et ton remord!

. . . . . .

Tu ne remonteras au ciel qui te vit naître
Que par les cent degrés de l'echelle de l'être,
Et chacun en montant te brûlera le pied.—*Vis. XV.*

"Down, down! he cried. Thou who descent couldst choose!
By thy remorse, fall'n Spirit, mete thy fall!

. . . . . .

To ope thy native heav'n nought shall avail
Till thou the hundred steps of being's scale
Hast climb'd, and every step shall burn thy foot."—*Vis. XV.*

Here ends *The Fall of an Angel;* and even in this slight sketch the reader has doubtless perceived that which the perusal of the poem will confirm,—that the

original idea has been absorbed by the symbol, that the principle, the creed, the theological point of view, has disappeared under the drama, under the complicated, I might say, entangled, narrative of the material facts. I will not enter upon a field that would lead us too far. I will not ask M. de Lamartine for what reason, if he was determined to write this poem of the human soul from the point of view of the Fall, he chose to make his angel lapse through love, instead of adhering to the fall through pride, which might have afforded him the eminently poetic conception of rehabilitation through love, and would always find us ready to *feel* in our hearts the justice of the expiation, how bitter soever; whilst a sort of involuntary sympathy attracts us towards the divine being precipitated into sin by an impulse of tenderness and devotedness. Neither will I cavil at the book of the sainted old man, which is anything but *primitive*, of which all the precepts belong to a far less remote epoch than that of the poem, and which it is not easy to adjust, in a poem essentially progressive in its parts, with the ideas predominant in one of the last, *Jocelyn*. But I cannot, even while confining myself within the limits of art, forbear asking of the poet some account of his subject, of the primary idea of his poem. This idea, which ought to gleam through all the parts of the composition, which ought, in a word, to constitute its artistic unity, where is it, if not in what serves as a sort of prologue to the poem? Take away this pro-

logue, begin with Cedar's conflict with the robbers of Doïdha, efface the four or five lines I have quoted, and say, where is the Fall, where the Angel. Say whether you can even guess that a great expiation is in question, that through all these events a religious mystery, an immense and holy rehabilitation is in progress. I find nothing but human concerns, the vicissitudes and miseries of men, without law, without purpose, without relation to the designs of Providence; there is no *fallen angel* here. Lamartine, in one of his first *Méditations*, said, "Man's a fallen god, who recollects the skies;" and I expected that the whole poem would be a commentary upon this line. Nothing of the kind; Cedar does not *recollect*. Never does his soul soar towards heaven on the wings of aspiration, never does it recognise heaven's presence by resignation. Cedar enjoys and suffers, struggles, and yields to force, seeing only the material; immediate causes of his sufferings, and protesting against them with all his might. He drags himself through the tossings of a life incessantly crushed and dominated by crises altogether casual, and in which nothing, it must be said, could lead him back, by thought, *to his native heaven;* whilst not a single flash of the past, not a single presentiment of the future, crosses the darkness of his night. Is it too soon? Is it only in the second or third episode that the light of divine things may begin to dawn on the horizon of the fallen soul? I know not; and assuredly, by thus giving us his

great poem in fragments, without affording us a single glance at the whole, M. de Lamartine has placed himself in the most advantageous position possible in relation to criticism. It is not, however, the less true, that in the work of the poet, the thought, the whole, ought, more or less, to have its reflection in every part. M. de Lamartine has himself recalled this law of unity by the voice of the Spirit in the last lines of the poem.

Now I say that there is not in his book any moral *measure* of the *Fall.* It is not, it cannot be, with *remorse* that Cedar prepares to die; the words of the Spirit are there inapplicable, and can only serve as a text to the condemnation of the poem. If it is not by a certain measure of suffering alone that the soul may redeem its immortality, but, as it is to be believed, by a deep sense of the justice of the punishment, and of its value as an expiation, then *The Fall of an Angel* is and will remain completely null with regard to the religious and philosophic thought: in it Conscience has no representative.

I therefore see in this work of M. de Lamartine only a series of fanciful pictures containing the history of a man named Cedar and of a woman named Doïdha, possessing simply an artistic value, to be appreciated. This value is unfortunately too slight to yield any compensation for the deficiency in the thought of which I have just complained.

There are, indeed, here and there poetic beauties,

graceful images, descriptions brilliantly written, pages which recall M. Lamartine's best manner; but their number is very small, and there is not one that the poet has not surpassed in his preceding compositions. The Hymn of the Cedars of Lebanon (Vis. I.) has been cited as a magnificent passage; to me it appears only fine, and, even independently of the blemishes that disfigure it,—such as the comparison of the thrillings of prayer communicated to the cedars by the instinct of the divine virtue, to the undulations impressed upon the lion's mane by the wind of wrath, that reddens his nostril and growls in his breast,—I should not be at a loss to find in the *Harmonies* analogous and considerably superior passages. Some landscapes are well given, but never, in *La Chute d'un Ange*, does nature appear to us reproduced and felt as in *Jocelyn*. Doïdha's sleep (Vis. V.) is a study by a master's hand; but it stands alone, or nearly so. The vision that comprises Cedar's captivity amidst the tribe of Phayz, the budding love of Doïdha, and the sort of education that she gives her lover, is beautiful from one end to the other: admirably in it do the graceful, the chaste, and the sweet harmonise: it reminds one of a group of children by Correggio in a landscape of Claude Lorraine's. But this is all: and are *episodic* beauties sufficient for a poem?

Poets—subjective and objective—poets who rule us by *their own* thought or by *ours*, purified and reproduced, or who draw for us from the ex-

ternal world imperishable individualities, brothers and sisters for the soul, when solitary and sad from loneliness, I admit them all, I love them all. They reveal to us duties, or create for us affections. They elevate us above prosaic realities, or sweeten them to us by peopling with loveable and loving phantoms the desert that we are so often obliged to traverse in order to reach the goal of our career. This sufficiently implies that we have a right to exact as much of him who asks us to acknowledge him a poet. Now, nothing of all this, I say it reluctantly, have we gained from *La Chute d'un Ange.* We may be interested, as we run it over, in the vicissitudes of its personages, as one is interested, through curiosity, in every action that develops itself before us; but when the book is closed all is over. Neither the sphere nor the energy of our thought is aggrandised; no bewitching form has joined the group of ideal forms, our companions for life, created for us by Dante, Shakspeare, and Goethe, under the names of Francesca, Ophelia, Clara, Margaret, and so many more. I need not, perhaps, speak of Cedar; but Doïdha herself—Doïdha, upon whom the poet has lavished, as upon a favourite child, all the treasures of his imagination—what is she to us? After perusing and reperusing those long and often-repeated, minutely-detailed descriptions of her person, I have closed my eyes to see if she would not appear before my soul, but vainly did I strive to evoke her image. The poet has only known how to paint to us every

part of this being, he has not known how to transmit to us that which constitutes unity—its individuality. He has killed* life by analysis. For a moment I hoped he would have made something of Lakini; I thought he would have rehabilitated her by love, that he would have commissioned Cedar to regenerate to virtue and the life of the soul that creature of beauty to whom the Titans could reveal only the life of the senses. Again, I was deceived. Love does not purify Lakini; jealousy immediately smothers the sort of astonishment to which a love so different from all that she has been habituated to excite and feel gives birth in her.

Where poetry presents neither individualities nor inculcates a great idea, what remains besides the form? In these present times, poetry that offers only beauties of form bears, in my opinion, its condemnation within itself. It is possible, nevertheless, that, by dint of labour, of external graces, of captivating images, of skilfully-managed cadences, the mind may sometimes be illusively influenced—may, whilst softly lulled by a dreamy harmony, be made to forget the present vacuity. This occurs only too often; but we run no such risk with *La Chute d'un Ange.*

I need not concern myself with the incorrectness of language, the violations of the laws of rhythm, the distortions of grammar itself: upon these French

* A French critic, usually very severe, M. Gustave Planche, finds in Doïdha a union of the Virgins of Raphael and the Magdalen of Correggio. It is true that the same critic thinks the carrying off the two children by the eagle, *Homeric.* See *Revue des Deux Mondes,* Libr. 1 July, 1838.

critics have long since done justice. But what they have overlooked, and what appears to me a far more important matter for animadversion, as affecting the very nature of the style, is a real poetic materialism, which, in an inconceivable and systematic manner, predominates throughout the whole poem—a materialism always, to my mind, the fatal symptom of fall, but which, on the present occasion, strikes the more, because it displays itself in two-thirds of the poem, in the representation of a *horrible* not possessing even the merit of M. Victor Hugo's *grotesque*—that of contrast.

A critic with whom I nowise sympathise, but to whom I do not deny a certain acuteness of observation in all that concerns the poetic *form*, or style, if the reader prefers that term, M. Nizard, reproached M. Lamartine two years ago with a habit of exalting and transfiguring everything, that singularly impairs the reality of his pictures. "Who would not believe," he has somewhere said, "that a bird was spoken of in this line:—'Surprising in his NEST the new-HATCH'D fawn?' The lair of quadrupeds is not a *nest;* and to be *hatched* is applicable only to the young of oviparous animals, and especially of birds for whom this graceful word seems to have been appropriately invented.* But M. de Lamartine wished to give the fawn a nobler abode than the thicket of a wood, and an origin more poetic than

* Our word hatch cannot claim the admiration for euphony here lavished on the French *éclore*, which applies likewise to the more beautiful opening of the flower-bud.

the parturition of a doe after gestation." Transfer this trick of exaltation, of transfiguration, often to the horrible, always to material objects, and you have the poetry of *The Angel's Fall.*

There is here nothing vague or ideal, nothing of that intangible indefinite which abounded in M. Lamartine's first manner; everything is positive, palpable, massive; everywhere the appropriate word, the picturesque word, has dethroned the abstract or metaphysical word; everywhere, in the representation of objects, analysis and material detail have supplanted the synthetical expression, defining an object by that which constitutes its life and unity. No more of those figures with lightly-traced outlines, a little indeterminate and hovering, like the visions of thought, but of which the expression, caught in its prominent and characteristic feature, remains so thoroughly imprinted on the soul. No more of those pictures of nature, painted by masses, and of which some principal features, some deep lines, drawn after the manner of great artists, suffice to give us so just a conception of the whole. Dorîdha is described, as by inventory, ten times in the poem; the first time in seventy-five lines: the giant who surprises her in her sleep requires forty. The landscapes are counterdrawn; represented in their smallest accessories, then inundated with light, shed equally upon all points, without contrasts, without shade. Does the poet seek images, similes, or analogies for anything? He

quits not his sphere: one material object awakens in him no other idea than that of another material object; and that entire source of poetry—so difficult, but so potent—which incessantly passes from the physical to the moral, seeking the harmonies of the two worlds, is for him dried up. He can, indeed, still descend from the world of spirit to the world of matter, and translate to the senses what should be addressed only to the soul; but he can no longer re-ascend. He can say of religious enthusiasm—

> "There, was the ecstasy that *bounds* and glows,
> From o'er-fill'd breast *extravasating flows*,
> And holy *boilings* of parturient soul;"

—but he can no longer write anything like the forty or fifty admirable lines that crown his *Etoiles* (*Nouvelles Méditations, VIII.*) But an example, taken from amongst a thousand, will better illustrate this tendency towards a poetry altogether external, this luxuriance of materialisation. I take it from the first Vision.

La lune	The moon . . . . .
. . . . .	. . . . .
S'élevait pleine et ronde entre ces larges troncs,	Rising 'twixt those large stems, round, full, and clear,
Et des cédres sacrés touchant déjà les fronts,	Touching the hallow'd cedars' *fronts* so near,
Semblait un grand fruit d'or qu'à leur dernière tige	She seems a *golden fruit*, on their last bough
Avaient mûri le soir ces arbres du prodige.	By those miraculous trees matur'd ev'n now.
De rameaux en rameaux les limpides clartés	From branch to branch the limpid radiance *streams*,
Ruisselaient, serpentaient en flots répercutés,	*Winding* in *reflex* of *refracted* beams.

Comme un ruisseau d'argent, qu'une chute divise,	A *stream* of *silver* thus, that falls divide
En nappes de cristal pleut, scintille, et se brise ;	In *crystal sheets*, *rains*, *sparkles*, scatters wide,
Puis, s'etendant à terre en immenses toisons,	Then spreads in giant fleeces on the ground,
Sur les pentes en fleurs blanchissaient les gazons.	*Silv'ring* the flowery slopes and turf around.

If the analysis of which I have indicated the course by the words in *italics* be applied to the whole poem, with the exception of a few pages, the result will be the same. Everywhere shall we find the same luxuriance of epithets, all enhancing the physical appearance of the objects; everywhere the same unfolding of sensible images, *reflecting and refracting* themselves, as the poet says; everywhere, in a word—let the expression be allowed me,—matter multiplied into itself. There are people who have called this richness; but if a series of magnifying glasses repeat a handful of gold—Boileau would say of tinsel—over and over again, is one the richer for that?

Nothing can be more monotonous, more wearisome, more opposite to the nature of poetry, which should lend the reader wings, than such a process. One rises sated, heavy, oppressed, as from sensual orgies. I say this, speaking only of the better parts of the poem, of those in which the worship of Form is kept within the limits of the Beautiful; for what shall be said of those, much more numerous, in which this power of poetic materialism is employed in the service of the Ugly, the Horrible, the Disgusting? What shall be said of the impression received from

the perusal of the Tenth Vision, in which the poet has put his imagination to the rack in order to terrify us with whatever is most revolting—as sculptures formed of living beings, children and young girls, serving the Titans for cushions, dramatic representations consisting of real tortures, and I know not what besides? What shall be said of portraits like that of Asrafiel?

Dans ses canaux renflés sa sonore narine
Aspirait à grands flots le vent dans sa poitrine;
Sa joue, où de la flamme ondoyait la couleur,
Trahissait de son sang la brutale chaleur;
Dans ses regards perdues, sur ses lèvres massives
On voyait respirer des images lascives;
Et sur son sein le poil épais et chevelu
Flottait comme la soie aux flancs d'un bouc velu.

Vast floods of air his sonorous nostril press'd
Through turgid channels into his large chest.
His cheek, where fire's own colour waving play'd,
The brutal heat fev'ring his blood, betray'd.
Upon his massive lips' empurpled swell
Lascivious images were seen to dwell;
And on his breast thick tufts of hair to float,
Like silken locks from side of shaggy goat.

Or of these lines upon Sabher?

Toute sa joie était d'inventer des supplices,
Pour savourer le coup prolongeant le tourment,
Il ne donnait la mort qu'avec raffinement;
Il suçait la douleur dans les fibres humaines,
Goutte à goutte de sang il épuisait les veines,
Membre à membre il semait le mourant en lambeaux,
Brûlait à petit feu la victime aux flambeaux,

He in devising executions joy'd;
Prolonged the torture, savouring each throe,
Nor, save in mode refined, would death bestow;
Suffering would suck from human nerves, and drain
The life-blood drop by drop from every vein;
Scatter the dying victim's limbs afield,
Or burn with such slow fire as torches yield;

Déchirait la peau vive en soignantes lanières,
Des crânes décharnés arrachait les crinières ;
Et suspendant ainsi le squelette vivante,
Aux creneaux d'une tour balancé par le vent,
Jusqu' à ce que la peau, du crâne détachée,
Du front qu'elle soutient fil à fil arrachée,
Abandonnant le corps, se rompît sous le poids,
Il le laisse tomber et mourir mille fois !

The living skin in gory strips would tear,
From fleshless skulls would rend the flowing hair ;
Thus the live skeleton from turret high
To hang, the sport of winds that whistle by,
Until the skin, dissever'd from the head,
And tearing from the forehead, shred by shred,
Broke with the body's weight, and giving way,
Let the wretch drop, to thousand deaths a prey.

Or of the combat—I ask pardon for this last extract ; but I must needs prove the poet's fall—between Asrafiel and Cedar, in Vision XV. ?

Cédar, sans étancher son sang pur qui ruisselle,
Glisse son front rampant sous son immense aisselle,
Et par ses flancs charnus à son tour l'etreignant,
Emporte de sa côte un gros lambeau saignant.
On dirait qu'insensible au vil sang que le souille,
Pour devouer son cœur jusqu'aux côtes il fouille ;
Sa dent, qui sur ses os heurte sans s'ebrécher,
Enlève à chaque coup des lanières de chair ;
Un ruisseau de sang noir sur ses lèvres écume ;
Chaque quartier de corps sous sa mâchoire fume.
Sans ralentir sa rage il les secoue au vent,
Elargit sa morsure, et plonge plus avant ;

Cedar, ev'n whilst his veins their pure stream shed,
Crawling, 'neath that vast armpit slips his head,
Grapples his brawny flanks, with straining chest
And bleeding gobbets mammocks from his breast :
Unheeding the vile blood, that sullying pours,
To seek the heart the gory side explores ;
His teeth, unharmed, grate on the ribs, now bare,—
Each time they strike, morsels of flesh they tear :
The black blood gushing foams about his lips ;
Smokes in his jaw each living lump he strips ;
These on the wind, with rage unquench'd he shakes,
His bite enlarges, deeper in he breaks ;

Et, découvrant le cœur sous la chair déchirée,	Finds 'neath the mangled flesh the heart that quails,
Il y plonge en lion sa dent désespérée.	And, lion-like, with desperate tooth assails.

Heaven be thanked, I have done! The reader has seen enough to understand M. de Lamartine's fall, and the nature of that fall. He must already, like me, have put the question to himself, how the author of the *Méditations*, the poet of the deepest emotions, of the most spiritual aspirations, can have come to delight in this gross and carnal poetry, in the manner of the Rubens school, without the genius of Rubens, or his worship of material *beauty*? This *how* I will endeavour to explain to him, as it appears to me to follow necessarily from a comprehensive retrospect of Lamartine's whole poetic career.

When the first *Méditations* appeared in 1820, they made a sensation in France such as few books can make. It was poetry of a perfectly new species, raising its voice at the very moment when a generation, sick of the cold and measured versification of the Empire, was asserting that all poetry was dead, and that henceforward to prose—a lofty and poetic prose—appertained the expression of the thoughts of the epoch. This poetry looked to the future by the nature of the ideas, or more properly of the sentiments, and by its aim; whilst by a certain chastity of form, by respect for the language, and even by some few old classical reminiscences, although proclaiming the independence of Art as a right, it pre-

served a connecting link with national literary traditions. It satisfied all demands, and was entitled to find favour with all schools. The author's poetic talent was, moreover, truly and incontestably powerful. Never had France known such elegy. Never had hope breathed amidst ruins hymns so sweetly melancholy. But besides—I should say above—all this, high above the literary point of view, there was something more. There was in men's souls an anxiety for the reknitting of earth to heaven, a yearning after that something which may for moments be lulled to sleep, but never extinguished in the hearts of nations—the sense of the Infinite, of the Imperishable, the tendency to sound the abyss that conceals the solution of the mysteries of the soul, the innate desire to know, at least to surmise, something of the 'starting-point' and the goal of mundane existence; in a word, religious faith. So many ruins had accumulated during the twenty or thirty years that had just elapsed! So much human grandeur had been eclipsed! Well might they, who had seen, first the Revolution, then Napoleon moulder away, think that all things were nothing, save in relation with the eternal idea, the hidden design, which God verifies through the world. The Empire had just fallen, and men understood confusedly that a whole world concluded with the Empire, that a new world was to arise from its gigantic ruins. During the Empire one-half of the soul had been smothered. Matter—in the service of an idea in-

deed, for only at that price is matter active, but this was not taken into account—had eclipsed mind; force had stifled conscience; and conscience, with all its previsions, with all its rapid intuitions of the things of heaven, was, in its turn, vigorously reacting. Conscience asked for a return to a superior, immutable order of facts, which might explain the evanescent and often apparently contradictory facts of the day—for the reinthronement of moral unity, governing from on high the crises of thought, the successive revolutions, the movement, so abrupt and irregular, on the surface of the human mind: it asked for a common religious faith, affording a fixed point amidst the whirlwind of things; an assured asylum against the scepticism with the germs of which it had been inoculated by an all-dissolving philosophy; against the despair that sometimes seized it at the sight of the instability of human foundations, and of the bitter deceptions every moment experienced from the external world. Lamartine stood forward as the interpreter of this imperious want. He associated the flights of his muse with all the protests that were fermenting, unexpressed, in men's hearts. He uttered the complaint of all, he murmured the hope of all. He became the harmonious echo of the anxieties, of the internal struggles of a whole generation. He painted himself in his verses as suffering from the disease of the age, and labouring to cure both himself and it. In a word, he assumed the attitude of a religious poet.

As such he was evidently accepted, as was Victor Hugo, simultaneously, as Chateaubriand had previously been: and here lay, in great part, the secret of his talent and of his fame.

Was he really a religious poet? No, he was not.

The malady of the age he indeed had; and never perhaps, at least in France, had it been so well expressed; but the remedy he had not. It might even be said that the poet sometimes detects himself doubting whether any exists. In the first and in the new *Méditations* there is religious feeling,—the disposition to which somebody has given the name of *religionism*—but no religion: the yearning for a belief is not belief. In order to be a religious poet, it is not enough, in my eyes at least, to cry Lord! Lord! to lie prostrate before God, and, with the head in the dust, to confess his infinite power: it is necessary to *feel* his holy law, and to make others *feel* it in such sort as that they shall constantly and calmly act in obedience to its precepts. I say calmly, and this calmness of the believer must, above all things, radiate from the poet's brow upon those who listen to his lays, as the spirit of God radiated from the brow of Moses upon the Israelite multitudes wandering mistrustingly through the desert.

For this is, indeed, the mission of the religious poet—to console, to strengthen, to guide. The God whom he adores is the God of life and love; that is to say, of works wrought in love—is the

God who uplifts, the God who pardons, but on condition that we shall love much, which means, that we shall *do* much; for what is love merely contemplative, love that sacrifices not itself? Wherefore roll the forehead in the dust, like an African Santon? Did he not form that forehead after his own image, that, upraised towards heaven, it might adore? Why tremble in every limb, like a criminal before human justice? Has he not said, "I am the good God; purify your hearts, and serve me in joy?" Such is the God of the religious poet. And he, the author of the *Méditations*, what is his God? whom does he adore?

He adores Fear. The God whom he adores is the God of the East, before whose omnipotence he perceives but two possible parts for man—blasphemy or annihilation. Betwixt these two states the poet, as he himself tells us, long oscillated. He strove, by the solitary potency of his soul, to scale heaven like the Titans, to wrest his secret from the Everlasting, and seat himself by his side. Struck by the sight of evil, a prey to the sorrows inseparable from human life, he rebelled; long did he, like the serpent, bite with impotent tooth the rod of iron that crushed him; then, when he saw the fruits of science, sought for its own sake, turn to dust and ashes between his lips; when, exhausted with his efforts, he felt himself vanquished in his individual struggle against evil and sorrow, he sank helpless back into nothingness he degraded, and denied him-

self. With a sort of frenzy of submission, he took to kissing the rod that struck him (see *Méditations; à Lord Byron*), he became not the servant, but the slave of a God who will have no slaves. Like Victor Hugo, he has condemned man, science, the whole world, to annihilation; like him, perhaps even more than him, he plunged into that permanent contradiction which blasphemes the creation whilst blessing the Creator. If he has ever dared to look life in the face, it has been to exclaim (see *Nouvelles Méditations*, XV. *Les Préludes*)—

Oublions, oublions: c'est le secret de vivre.
Oh let us forget, 'tis the secret of life.

If he has dared to think of the gift of poesy with which God has endowed him, it has been to allow it a merely negative power, and to say (XXVI. *Adieux à la Poësie*)—

La lyre ne nous fut donnée
Que pour endormir nos douleurs.
On us the lyre was but bestow'd
To lull our griefs to sleep.

The expression of this struggle is found in many of the *Méditations*, sometimes even too vividly, and so as to hurry away unconsciously young, inexperienced minds (see *Méditations*, II. *à Lord Byron*, VII. *Le Désespoir*, etc.) The expression of the second tendency is everywhere. Nothingness, disenchantment, despondency—this is the eternal theme of the *Méditations*; it is only thus that the poet rises towards God. Hence that feeling of a struggle betwixt faith and reason which recurs at every step, as if it were not our duty to labour incessantly to place reason under the ægis of faith, as if faith were

not itself transcendent reason. Hence—whenever the poet, led away by his original instincts, returns to the search for happiness on earth—that longing to find in it, not a renewal of energy to fulfil his mission, but forgetfulness, inaction, a sort of annihilation of his individuality, which, in the *Nouvelles Méditations*, dictated the Fourth (*La Sagasse*), the Eleventh (*Elégie*), the Twelfth (*Tristesse*), the Thirteenth—(*La Branche d'Amandier*), inspirations now Tibullian, now Horatian—in a word, pagan, disguised under Christian forms; hence, in fine, that gloomy and unfruitful sorrow, that breath of sadness drying up the spirit, that sense of moral depression, of languor, piercing through his poetry, and which is likewise, as I firmly believe, its definitive result, the only effect remaining in the soul after its perusal And, whilst thus writing, it is not of the avowedly melancholy *Méditations*, of those in which lamentation predominates, that I am thinking: far from it; I am the first to protest against that habit of criticism which looks on the poet's mantle to find out some portion that time or the winter's frost has prematurely worn, and judges him by that scrap; a cry of anguish may occasionally break from lips the most habituated to whisper words of resignation. It is of the general tendency that I speak. It is after the pieces strongest in Godward bursts that I notice this something resembling exhaustion. It is on the wings of imagination, rather than on those of the heart, that we have been compelled to follow the poet in

his flight: the heart has remained sunk in bitterness, *weary of all things, even of hope,* and repeating in whispers to itself the *What can be done with life?* of the Nineteenth *Méditation.*

And men, his *brothers* in *sorrow,* what has he to say to them? What has he to give them for their support and guidance in their pilgrimage? Nothing. One consolation on their death-bed, in the Twenty-second *Méditation* (*Le Crucifix*), an admirable piece, the only one of the Meditations, perhaps, in which religious inspiration really touched M. de Lamartine. And by an inevitable consequence, although it strikes at first sight as a contradiction, the anathema he has breathed soon changes into careless indifference; the severe Jansenist asceticism into a sort of individual Epicurism, after the pagan fashion. Human life being in itself of no value, why rack it with cares, why furrow it with active and serious thoughts? Let it glide away like a dream, as fast as possible, and let us try to abridge its duration by enjoyment. Listen to this:—

Pourvu que dans les bras d'une épouse chérie,
Je goute obscurément les doux fruits de ma vie;
Que le rustique enclos par mes pères planté,
Me donne un toit l'hiver et de l'ombre l'été;
Et que d'heureux enfans ma table couronnée
D'un convive de plus se peuple chaque année,
Ami, je n'irai plus ravir si loin de moi,

So that I may, in th' arms of a loved wife,
Taste in obscurity the sweets of life,
So that my father's rustic home and field
A roof in winter, shade in summer yield,
So that my board, with happy children blest,
Be peopled yearly with an added guest,—
No longer, friend, I'll rove afar to steal

Dans les secrets de Dieu, ces comment, ces pourquoi,
Ni du risible effort de mon faible génie,
Aider peniblement la sagesse Infinie.

Me reposant sur Dieu du soin de me guider
A ce port invisible où tout doit aborder,
Je laisse mon esprit, libre d'inquiétude,
D'un facile bonheur faisant sa seule étude,
Et pretant sans orgueil la voile à tous les vents,
Les yeux tournés vers lui, suivre le cours du temps.
Et toi ? . . . . .

Dis-nous, comme autrefois nous l'aurait dit Horace,
Si l'homme doit combattre ou suivre son destin ;
Si je me suis trompé du but ou de chemin ;
S'il est vers la sagesse une autre route à suivre,
Et si l'art d'être heureux n'est pas tout l'art de vivre.

God's secrets, and the how, the why, reveal,
Nor with my feeble genius laughably,
As painfully, to aid Omniscience try.

Trusting in God for guidance to that strand,
That port invisible where all must land,
I let my mind each anxious care dismiss ;
Pursue, as its sole study, easy bliss ;
Unchec'k'd by pride, yield to each breeze's force,
And follow, watching God alone, Time's course.
And thou,

Tell us, as Horace would have told of thee,
Should man resist his Destiny, or obey ?
Have I mistaken, or my goal, or way ?
Can other roads to wisdom lead the heart ?
Save th' art of happiness has life an art ?

Or to this :—

Insensé le mortel qui pense !
Toute pensee est une erreur.
Vivez et mourez en silence,
Car la parole est au Seigneur.

Asseyez-vous près des fontaines,
Tandis qu'agitant les rameaux,
Du midi les tiedes haleines
Tout flotter l'ombre sur les eaux :

Au doux murmure de leurs ondes
Exprimez vos grappes fécondes,

Où rongit l'heureuse liqueur ;

To think is sheer insanity ;
All thought is error, vain as weak ;
In silence live, in silence die,
'Tis only for the Lord to speak.

Sit by this fountain, where the trees
A summer's branchy roof have made,
That, waved by tepid southern breeze,
Chequers the stream with flick'ring shade.

There, to the murmuring of the flood,
Express the luscious grape's pure blood,

Blest liquor, blushing child of art ;

Et de main en main, sous vos treilles,
Passez-vous ces coupes vermeilles
Pleines de l'ivresse du cœur.
Ainsi qu'on choisit une rose

Dans les guirlandes de Sarons,
Choisissez une vierge éclose
Parmi les lis de vos vallons;
Enivrez vous de son haleine,
Ecartez ses tresses d'ébène,
Goûtez les fruits de sa beauté:
Vivez, aimez, c'est la sagesse!

Hors le plaisir et la tendresse,
Tout est mensonge et vanité.

. . . . . .

Et vous, pour quoid'un soin stérile
Empoisoner vos jours bornés?
Le jour present vaut mieux que mille
Dès siècles qui ne sont pas nés.
Passez, passez ombres légeres:
Allez où sont allés vos pères,
Dormir auprès de vos aïeux.
De ce lit où la mort sommeille,
On dit qu'un jour elle s'éveille

Comme l'aurore dans les cieux.

Beneath the vines reposing, pass
From hand to hand the rosy glass,
Fill'd with th' ebriety of heart.
From garlands, fragrant with perfumes,
Even as we select a rose,
Select a virgin, as she blooms
In valleys where the lily grows;
Inebriate, her breath inhale,
Uplift her tresses ebon veil,
Her beauty's fruits taste happily.
"Live, love!" This, wisdom's rule confess;
Save pleasure and save tenderness,
All is deceit and vanity.

. . . . . .

Then why with sterile cares and fears
Envenom evanescent days?
The present day unnumber'd years
Of unborn centuries outweighs.
Pass, flitting shadows, pass ye on;
Go thither, where your sires are gone,
Beside them close in sleep your eyes:
From that low bed of slumber, death,
'Tis said, shall wake to life and breath,
And, like Aurora, in the skies.

The pieces from which these fragments are taken are entitled, the first, *Philosophie*, the second, *La Sagesse*. And now, whenever we shall hear the poet moan, or hold life cheap, we know why: he aimed at happiness, and has missed it. He is no longer a believer, an apostle, impelling us to the foot of the sanctuary: he is a disappointed man, who, frustrated of the enjoyment he had projected here below, is resolved, by force of prayers and tears, to storm the joys of heaven. He loves his fellow-men, he says. What matters it to us if he can do nothing for them? He wishes for the progress of the world: why should

he, since he disdains it? Have we not a right to believe that he loves only himself in us? Has he not told us that life is nothing but the art of being happy?

Yet there are everywhere men, whole peoples, who suffer—nations desirous of accomplishing their mission upon earth, and whom brute force hourly flings back, living, into the grave; whole races grovelling in slavery and ignorance, that should be relieved, and awakened to the works of God. Yet evil is in the world, and should be fought. Yet further, this world, which the poet disdains, is a divine conception—these men, whom he dooms to inaction, have been created for an end—this reason, this genius, which he calls nothingness and vanity, are the beacons given us by God, that we may see that end, and the course by which we are to reach it. And should not a religious poet, instead of blowing them out, teach us to regulate them, and by their light to conquer the bewildering darkness? "Lean upon the staff of hope," says Tegner, the Swedish bishop; "learn and reflect. Then rise up and battle for mankind with the word, with the sword! Be misunderstood, be hated; but still clasp thy fellow-creatures to thy lacerated heart." There is more religion in those few lines than in all the *Méditations* of M. Lamartine.

I have dwelt thus much upon the *Méditations*, because in them lies the germ of M. de Lamartine's success and subsequent failure; all that he has since produced is but its necessary growth and blossom. This was not perceived. To a poet often so admir-

able, the oscillation between desire and fear of his weakness, between God and pleasure, was willingly forgiven. At bottom, this was the state of the century itself at its opening. M. de Lamartine, with his three or four thoughts, sweet, dreamy—Bellinian, if I may be here allowed this recollection of an artist whose musical inspiration seems to me absolutely analogous to that of the poet—appeared to tread pretty closely on the future. He will go forward, was the cry. He has not gone forward; the age goes forward alone, and without him.

Les Harmonies, in 1830, proved what I have just said. They were very coldly received; and this coldness was not owing, whatever may be averred, to the events which followed hard on their apparition. Revolutions, at their commencement, always exalt the poetic sense of nations; and had the chord vibrating under the poet's touch been that which was trembling at the heart of the age, enthusiastically would the France of July have adopted the *Harmonies*. Neither was it owing to a very decided poetic inferiority; the author's point of view once admitted, poetry flows in them often in brimming measure. Even independently of those which are confined to the sphere of personal emotions and affections, such as *Le Souvenir d'Enfance*, *Le Rossignol*, *Le Premier Regret*, etc.—all very beautiful, and as such received,—the religious *Harmonies* bear traces of great power; but the predominant thought was not that which the times were then evolving. The *Harmonies* proclaimed that, for

the poet, the struggle was over. They professed to give the solution of the problem; and this solution was nothing more than that of which some misgivings might have been felt from the *Méditations*, a moral suicide completed—an absolute obliteration of individuality—an overwhelming of all the active faculties, of moral power, of the mission undertaken, of liberty, under the sense of the Infinite. With the exception of *Le Chêne*, in which the poet admirably well rises from "nature up to nature's God"—of *L'Humanité*, in which, by the way, the portraiture of woman appears to us superior to that, so highly extolled, of Doïdha —of the *à l'Esprit Saint*—of the first of the second book, *Pensées des Morts*, which, from the line—

Ils t'ont prié pendant leur courte vie,	To thee they pray'd whilst their short life endured,

to this fine quatrain—

Etends sur eux la main de ta clémence:	To them extend thy clemency immense!
Ils ont péché; mais le ciel est un don!	They've sinned; but, Heaven, thy bounteous gift we feel!
Ils ont souffert; c'est une autre innocence!	They've suffer'd; 'tis a second innocence!
Ils ont aimé; c'est le sceau du pardon!	They've loved; and is not that their pardon's seal?

contains real poetic intuitions—the four books of the *Harmonies* confirm our assertions. Orientalism in thought, orientalism in form! God burthens man with his whole immensity. As in the dramas of Zach. Werner, in that "Vast sea of Being, that ingulphs all things," the individuality immerges itself, and is absorbed. Accordingly, the poetic form shows the bane-

ful influence: the attributes of power are employed, almost alone, to paint the Divine Nature; the same images constantly recur; epithets multiply; the pompous, the sonorous, abound; everything, even the rhythmic cadence, assumes a monotony, the more important to observe, because the endeavour to avoid it is the motive that has since driven the poet to plunge into the faults that signalise the *Chute d'un Ange.* With regard to life, the same contempt, the same disenchantment, the same thirst for repose, for inaction. Man's divorce from the world is there distinctly pronounced (XI. *L'Abbaye de Vallombreuse*). Man, *praying remote from mortals*, is there presented as the ideal type of religious feeling (VIII. liv. 4, *Le Solitaire*). The opposition between reason and conscience is here (XI. liv. 4), yet more loudly proclaimed than in the *Méditations;* as if the two were not sisters; as if conscience were not, perhaps, in the human being—may I be pardoned for any little obscurity in the expression?—a synthesis, of which reason is the verification, the analysis. Sometimes, as in the fourth *Harmonie* of the 2d book, *L'Infini dans les Cieux*, the mind is elevated as we read; it feels enlarged in the magnificent opening. As more of the work of God is embraced, we almost touch upon the conception of man's high mission in the universe; and suddenly the poet's hand hurls us down from the topmost round of the ladder of creation, and his bitter voice shouts to heaven these lines, which I must needs cite—for never did the thought, the secret terror,

which oppresses him like a nightmare, find elsewhere accents so imbued with truth :—

Oh ! que suis-je Seigneur ! devant les cieux et toi ?
De ton immensité le poids pèse sur moi,
Il m'égale au néant, il m'efface, il m'accable,
Et je m'estime moins qu'un de ces grains de sable ;
Car ce sable roulé par les flots inconstants,
S'il a moins d'étendue, hélas ! a plus de temps :
Il remplira toujours son vide dans l'espace
Lorsque je n'aurai plus ni nom, ni temps, ni place.
Son sort est devant toi moins triste que le mien :
L'insensible néant ne sent pas qu'il n'est rien,
Il ne se ronge pas pour aggrandir son être,
Il ne veut ni monter, ni juger, ni connaître ;
D'un immense désir il n'est point agité ;
Mort il ne rêve pas une immortalité !
Il n'a pas cette horreur de mon âme oppressée,
Car il ne porte pas le poids de ta pensée !

Crush'd by the weight of thine immensity,
I am made nothing, blotted from the land ;
Less I esteem me than that grain of sand,
The sand, by restless waves roll'd o'er and o'er,
If less extent than me, of time has more ;
Still will it occupy its part of space,
When I no longer have name, time, or place ;
Its sadness, if 'tis sad, than mine is less,
For senseless nothing feels not nothingness !
Seeks not enlarged existence with fierce throe ;
Struggles not to ascend, to judge, to know.
It pants not with desires immense as high ;
In death it dreams not immortality !
The horrors know not which my soul dismay,
For thy great thought on it could never weigh.

He forgets that, provided man fulfils his duty, it matters little whether there remain to him name or place here below. He forgets that it is neither by time nor space that the work of God is to be estimated, but by what is achieved, by what is developed in time and space. He forgets, that if man be superior to the grain of sand, it is precisely by his

intelligence; because there is in him a larger portion of the life of God; because God's design—I say design, not power, for it is the consciousness of design which now-a-days makes the believer—is more apparent in him, more visible;* and he forgets that it is to this deficient sense of human dignity, to this debasement of it, that we in great part owe the deplorable spectacle which the actual world presents us;—that when we begin to despise the individual in ourselves, we are disposed to crush him in others;—that if he, the poet, has arisen after a period during which man, presuming too arrogantly upon his own energies, had made himself a Titan, a Capaneus, the reaction ought not to overpower him;—that an abyss yawns between abuse and negation, between godless audacity and abjection;—that what we need is boldness with God, through God;—and that, in fine, there is, in lays like his, another danger, namely, that men in whom the immortal instinct of action cannot be stifled will again rebel, and seeing that the poet's religion leads to nothing but inaction, reject religion and the poet together. They make to

* I am well aware that towards the close of the *Harmonie* from which I have extracted a passage, M. de Lamartine recollects himself, and in some measure recants the thoughts that I reprobate. They have nevertheless passed over the religious poet's soul whilst gazing on the spectacle of creation, and remain as the expression of his inward, individual thought. The bitterness of the lines extracted, and of those that follow, springs from the heart, and is alone infectious, seductive to youthful readers. The burst of soul is only there; the lines that conclude the piece are cold, like philosophic resignation. It needs but to compare them. This is, besides, an exceptional case: elsewhere the poet's doctrine is found without corrective. The reader may find its last formula, dry and terrible, in *Novissima verba* (II. liv. 4).

themselves idols of bronze, or of gold, and place action under their protection. This always occurs when education strives to suppress, instead of directing, one of the essential elements of human nature.

With the *Harmonies* the character of M. de Lamartine's religious tendency and poetic vocation was pretty well established—perhaps, and I fear, immutably fixed. It would have required a sort of intellectual prodigy and integral renovation of his mind, to enable him to begin his career afresh, upon new bases. The question could henceforward turn only upon form. Would he reascend towards the *Méditations*, adhering anew to the simple, chaste, and spiritual expression that embellishes them; or, fearing to be early exhausted, hurried away unconsciously by a fundamental Orientalism, would he more and more adulterate by materialising it, by overloading it with ornaments and external gorgeousness? As a star appears for a moment to return towards us ere it plunges below the horizon, so M. Lamartine appeared to reascend. He published *Jocelyn* in 1836.* With regard to essentials, *Jocelyn* in nowise invalidates my thesis. Contemplation, inaction, predominate here

* I have no concern here with the *Voyage en Orient* ("Oriental Travels"), which appeared in 1835. Suffice it to remark, that in the midst of fine pages the dominant thought in nowise interrupts the concatenation that I am endeavouring to sketch. Thus, the Turkish people is, in his eyes, a people of patriarchs, of contemplators, of adorers, of philosophers. Thus, "The only mission of man here below, was," says he, "to glorify God, and to implore him; to view the work of God under every aspect; to admire its magnificence upon the mountains and the ocean; to adore and to bless his name, which no letter can contain: that is the whole of life."

as in M. Lamartine's other poetic labours. But as the author has in some sort exempted himself from criticism with respect to the ideas, by presenting himself upon this occasion only as the historian,—as he tells us, even in his preface, "*Jocelyn* is the Christian type of our epoch; the reader would deceive himself who should see in this subject anything but its poetic part; there is here no concealed purpose, no system, no controversy for or against such or such a religious creed;" we need not seek here for the development of the poet's thought; we accept it as a halt; and if I cite it here, it is only to mark therein the poet's last effort to maintain himself, at least as to poetic expression, in the right road, upon the ground of spirituality. In fact, the image here very seldom crushes the thought; and at the beginning of the second *epoch* there are passages in which reverie, the God-ward bursts of the soul, everything most difficult to catch and to express, is painted with the subtlety, purity, and delicacy of the spider's web suspended betwixt two trees, and giving free passage to the sunbeams. The solitude of the grotto of the eagles on the summit of the Dauphiny Alps, and the gradations by which the yearning for love arises in the heart of the young priest who inhabits there (3 *époque*) are equally well described; and notwithstanding some faulty similes, and the inaccuracies inherent in rapid versification, *Jocelyn* has fine pages of poetry. It was a bold effort, but it exhausted the poet. *La Chute d'un Ange* followed *Jocelyn*. Depression and

sterility of thought in the substance—adoration of form and materialism in the poetic expression,—it is the poet's last word, and does not in the least astonish us.

And now the reader will be pleased to recollect, if indeed he attach the slightest importance to a just appreciation of the existing situation of literature, what I said before with respect to Victor Hugo. Every one of my remarks is applicable to M. Lamartine, and the secret of his fall is the same as that which produced Victor Hugo's. Like him, M. Lamartine, influenced by the instincts of the age and of his own talent, proposed to himself, as his object, human rehabilitation from the religious point of view; like him, he has proved short-sighted and incompetent to perceive that the only possible rehabilitation for the *individual* is through the *species*. He has proved incompetent to rise to a just conception of the whole. He has proved incompetent to work upon the idea of humanity, such as Bacon, Vico, Pascal, have afforded it us, such as is in course of adoption by the age,—working, advancing, developing itself, as a single being, by the more and more comprehensive, the more and more intimate association of all its members, urged by a divine impulse towards the search after moral law, towards the progressive fulfilment of its providential destinies. He, for his part, saw only the individual, and has never overstepped that sphere. Thus he has been without a basis by which to appreciate the value, by which to understand the sense, the object, the import-

ance of actions: he has judged them all absolutely, and in their tangible, immediate results; not relatively and in their remote consequences, often impalpable, but always certain, as regards the great and combined work. Thus destitute of all aid, he found himself, at the very beginning of his quest in front of that terrible *unknown* which has consumed so many a lofty intellect, between the two terms of an equation as old as the world and never completely solved, of which the one represents *man*, the other GOD; and unable to catch the connecting-link, incompetent to follow the series of transforming operations, which alone can bring the first nearer to the second, he recoiled in terror: he was struck with nothing but the immense disproportion; he found nothing possible but to annihilate himself before it: hence, if indeed it deserve the name, his religious theory. At the same time, in the literary point of view, he found himself threatened with very early sterility. Poetry—great, ceaseless, eternal poetry—exists only in the development, the evolution of life: only there, in life, understood and felt in its universality, can inexhaustible variety be found. Concentrated in the narrow sphere of individuality—consequently having but an incomplete, mutilated conception of life,—contemplating it but partially, and at a given moment,—it was certain that he must, in a very short time, find himself drained of representations, of images, of combinations. More a poet than aught else, and unable to resign himself to remaining silent, he has

endeavoured to substitute, to the infinity of ideas that was denied him the innumerability of forms—to the monotony of *Les Harmonies*, the delusive and material variety of *La Chute d'un Ange*. This experiment is not, however, in my opinion natural to the poet, and I believe that it will be monotony, not variety of detail, that will dig the grave of his poetry.

This is the actual position of Lamartine; this is pretty nearly the actual position, though reached by somewhat divergent paths, of Victor Hugo;—Hugo and Lamartine—that is to say, the two most powerful poets of France of the 19th century, the two heads of the Romantic school,—the only difference between whom is caused by the peculiar temper of the talent of each. The one more naturally various, more objective, more dramatic—despite his bad dramas—more powerful, perhaps, takes the God, and imprisons him in the symbol: he is an idolater, a pagan. The other, more narrow-minded, more subjective, more lyrical—at bottom, perhaps, more religious,—absorbs the symbol in the God, the creature in the Creator; he is a pantheist, an orientalist. The connecting-link, the graduated scale, escapes both: the moral effect of their strains is identical. Neither the one nor the other is, as a religious educator-poet, the poet of the future.

The future—I now express my idea summarily, awaiting another opportunity to give it development—the future of art is not there. Until the present

day, setting aside an occasional genius—art has moved in the sphere of individual life; a representation or a theory of individuality is found at the end of all its productions; its views have never overstepped this thought, elaborated by ages, the emancipation of the individual from the numerous causes, physical and moral, that fettered part of his activity: in a word, the apotheosis of *man* has ever been, consciously or unconsciously, the object of art. This point of view is now left behind. This thought of art is realised, and, consequently, exhausted: it can no longer furnish the artist with a source of new and fresh inspirations; nor can it longer satisfy all our moral wants, all our actual creeds: therefore is it that the poetry of the last twenty or thirty years has only been able to disguise exhaustion under extravagance, or to betray, in the dejection that we have found in Lamartine and Victor Hugo, and that we should find in many others, a profound sense of its own impotence;—therefore is it that the public of our day affords so few believers in art, and that indifference is fast expelling enthusiasm and sympathy from the heart. Art, in order to blossom anew, must, at this time, undergo not simple modifications, but a radical change in its principal bearing and its end: as Bacon says, *instauratio facienda ab imis fundamentis.* The progress of ideas has little by little changed the point of view of philosophy, of science, of policy: art must advance with the world, and similarly change its own. What has hitherto

been its end must no longer serve as aught but a starting-point; its end will no longer be the individual, but society; in its productions, the man will yield precedence to Humanity. I have said *will yield precedence*, not be *obliterated*, for nothing that has been is obliterated. Individuality is sacred, for it is an essential element upon this earth; but it must henceforward harmonise with the social conception. Instead of contemplating the individual only in his internal life, in his own sphere, independent, insulated, the artist will have to study him in his internal and external life at once, in his place, and with his mission in creation: in a word, man, in relation with God, through humanity, will be his theme. This will be done; for the poet cannot, on pain of abdicating all influence over his brother men, sever himself from the impulse of the age. Now, let any one look around, and say whether, from the almost general tendency to react against the individualist thought of the eighteenth century, and to revivify belief;—from the desire for moral unity, piercing through every manifestation of mind, from the labours of scientific co-ordination even to the abortive attempts at new religions;—from the desire for material unity, which is again giving warmth in the heart of nations to the feeling of nationality, chilled towards the end of the last age by a vague and inert cosmopolitanism;—from the necessity which almost always converts political questions into social questions;—from demands everywhere arising for na-

tional education; — from those sympathies, so instinctive and so sudden, between nation and nation, dividing Europe so distinctly into two camps;—from a thousand other facts which I omit, and every one can find for himself;—it does not clearly appear that individual thought, at this present time, is gravitating towards collective thought, and that the harmonising of these two must be the drift of all that intellect thinks, does, or sings?

But when this shall be done, when poetry shall have risen a step upon the ladder, and when it shall be understood how narrow and egotistic is all the present poetry that entitles itself renovating and religious;—does it mean that there will be no place left for the expression of those deep-seated emotions, of those individual laments and aspirations, which, in his early days, made us love Lamartine? Does it mean that we shall forget, or look disdainfully down upon those poets who touched our youthful years? Not at all. God forbid that we should ever prove ungrateful to the flower that has breathed a perfume into our soul, has enriched our memory with a recollection against that period, too often unavoidable in this period of moral crisis, which lives wholly upon recollections. In all times, in all places, there will ever be affectionate and timid souls, yearning for an inward poetry, wholly wrought of individual emotions; there will always be spirits betrayed, bruised, unhappy, that will long to weep, in their solitude, over the pages of sister spirits,

bruised and deceived like themselves. And amongst these select poets, the confessors to whom oppressed spirits will fly, M. Lamartine will long hold his place. Only he will no more bear the title of the religious, the educator-poet. His personal inspirations, his love or fireside gossippings, his idyllic pictures, will remain; but all the religious, the lofty lyric, and preceptive part,—those, in short, which he perhaps prefers,—will, I apprehend, be forgotten.

Then we shall also recollect that, like some other poets of his age, M. Lamartine has been, in great measure, the reflection of his times; and that the contemporaneous generation perhaps imparted more to him than it received from him of the malady consuming both. And in the same spirit, let us hope that the lines with which I take leave of the poet, and which are from the *Harmonie* entitled *Les Révolutions*, may be the expression of a feeling recognised by the masses of suffering humanity in all lands: for it is the expression of a truth, the dim perception of which, like a breath of prophecy, is travelling through the world:—

. . . . L'homme en qui Dieu travaille
Change éternellement de formes et de taille:
Geánt de l'avenir, à grandir destiné,
Il use en vieillissant ses vieux vêtements, comme
Des membres élargis font éclater sur l'homme
Les langes où l'enfant est né.

. . . . For man, wrought by God's hands,
In shape and size continually expands:
The future's giant, growth his destiny,
In age he wears old garments to decay,
From manhood's burly limbs, as burst away
The swathings of his infancy!

L'humanité n'est pas le bœuf à courte haleine	Humanity's no ox, short-breath'd, ungain,
Qui creuse à pas égaux son sillon dans la plaine,	Ploughing with slowly-measured steps the plain,
Et revient ruminer sur un sillon pareil :	And ruminating o'er the furrow done ;
C'est l'aigle rajeuni qui change son plumage,	The eagle 'tis, in youth and plumage new,
Et qui monte affronter de nuage en nuage,	Upwards, from cloud to cloud soaring, to view
De plus hauts rayons du soleil.	The loftier radiance of the sun.
Enfans de six milles ans, qu'un peu de bruit étonne,	Tremble not children of six thousand years,
Ne vous troublez donc pas d'un mot nouveau qui tonne,	Though words unwonted thunder in your ears ;
D'un empire éboulé, d'un siecle qui s'en va !	Though empires topple, and a century goes !
Que vous font les débris qui jonchent la carrière ?	What if your path with ruins be o'erspread ?
Regardez en avant, et non pas en arrière !	Look ever forward, turn not back your head ;
Le courant roule à Jehovah !	The current tow'rd Jehovah flows.

The preceding article was just finished when *Les Recueillements Poëtiques*, a volume of poems published this year by M. Lamartine, reached my hands ; and, I hastened to peruse it, in the anxious hope that the poet might, by some sudden burst of renovated power, or pleasing flight of imagination, prove the fallacy, not of my theories, for I believe them to be too well established, but of the opinions which I had reluctantly expressed of the utter want of energy which characterised his former works ; but I was disappointed. The volume before me has effected no change in the impression which had been made on my mind, nor have I to alter one syllable of my former judgment. I say that it does not change one of my former impressions ;

I will not, however, add, that it confirms them, for, in honest truth, the volume is too feeble to do even that. It is perfectly characteristic of the usual style of the author; full of affected prettinesses, signifying nothing; of the same mannerisms which I noticed in *La Chute d'un Ange;* the same negligence, even verging on the ridiculous; but not containing one new idea, not one flight of fancy, not one originality of expression, to give character to the volume. It appears to be a collection of juvenile and worthless poems which had long lain forgotten in some old portfolio, and were now brought to light for the sole purpose of making up a book for M. Gosselin.

Of the twenty-seven poems, short and long, contained in this volume, some of them, as the *Fragment Biblique*, *L'Amitié de Femme*, etc., are far below mediocrity; while others, as the 16th, *A une Jeune Fille Folle*, and the verses on "The Death of the Duchess de Broglie," contain some few beauties; but in general they appear to be mere fugitive impressions, owing nothing either to previous meditation or after-study, without the lyrical beauties which characterise some of the *Harmonies*, and destitute of the smallest ray of poetic genius. There is more real poetry in some parts of the preface—written in prose—than in all the rest of the volume.

It is on this preface, therefore, for want of a better theme, that I will bestow a few words. The opinions I have endeavoured to express in the preceding part of this article appear to me to be summed up very

clearly in this introductory portion of the work; and it may be worth while to compare them together.

The preface is divided into two parts; the first treats of the private opinions of the author, and the second of his poetry. I will extract a rather singular paragraph from the first part.

"It does not in the least degree concern either you or me," he writes to his friend, "to know on what poor and passing individuals has rested, for a short period, the control of certain states; nor does it matter to futurity that such or such a year of the government of a certain little country called France was distinguished by the consulate of such or such a man. This concerns only his fame or that of the historian. But it is of importance to us to know whether the social world advances or retrogrades in its never-ceasing revolution; whether the education of the human race, hitherto so neglected or perverted, will be most rapidly promoted by liberty or by despotism; whether the law will be the expression of the rights and the duties of all classes, or of the tyranny of the few; whether human beings cannot be better governed by the principles of virtue than compulsory force; whether we shall not at length be enabled to introduce into the political relations between men and their fellow-citizens, and between neighbouring and distant nations, that divine principle of fraternity which descended from heaven to earth, in order to destroy all servitude and to sanctify all discipline; whether we cannot abolish legal murder; whether we cannot by degrees

efface from the code of every nation that wholesale murder called war; whether the whole race of man will not at length be brought to consider themselves as one large family, and not as isolated, hostile bands; whether the holy liberty of conscience will not increase with the multiplied refulgence of the light of reason; and the character and the providence of the Great Supreme, becoming from age to age better understood, will not become more influentially and profoundly adored, in word and in deed, in spirit and in truth.'

"These are the considerations which most or alone concern us. Think you, that in such an epoch as the present, and surrounded by circumstances as problematical and mysterious, that it is honourable to withdraw oneself from active life in order to join some small knot of sceptics; and to say with Montaigne, What do I know? or with the egotist, What does it concern me? No. When the Divine Judge shall, at the close of our short day on earth, summon us before the tribunal of our own consciences, neither our diffidence nor our weakness will be admitted as excuses for inaction. In vain shall we reply to him, We were nothing; we could do nothing; we were but as a grain of sand: He will reply, I placed before you, ere the time of probation had passed, the two scales in which the human race would alternately be weighed; in the one was that which was good, in the other that which was evil. True, you were but as a grain of sand; but who told you that that grain might not turn the scale on the right side? You were possessed of under-

standing to see and to comprehend this, and of conscience to choose the better part. You should have placed this grain of sand in the one scale or the other. But you have suffered the winds to waft it away, and it has been profitable neither to you nor to your brethren."

This is nobly conceived and eloquently expressed, The virtuous aspiration after the future is beautifully evident in these expressions, as well as in the stanzas with which I concluded my extracts. Human life, its vocation, and the especial mission of the individual, are well imagined. The author has expressed himself well, for he has well comprehended his duties. But what says the poet? The poet recoils, terrified at his novel task, and seeks to conceal, under the affectation of diffidence and carelessness, his vexation at the consciousness of his imbecility. He has obtained a glimpse of a new world; instead of adding fresh cords to his harp, he occupies himself in diminishing their number, in proportion as he limits the essence and the sphere of poetry. He tells us that with him poetry occupies but a twelfth part of his life; that it is an instinctive effusion of his soul at the period of silence and of solitude—at the last hour of the night, and the first of the morning; an effusion which he seeks not to control, and to which he brings neither inclination nor object, much less deep and sacred meditation. It is a sort of Æolian harp, which breathes out music as the morning zephyr sighs over its strings. He recounts the manner in which he passively submits to this natural though mysterious influence, and almost mechanically

obeys its impulses; and he endeavours to persuade us that it is simply an affair of personal gratification, to which he does not attach the slightest importance. He also repeats every instant, and the truth of this will be sufficiently evident to every reader of his last work, that he never erases, or corrects, or polishes anything that he has written. He never repels the charge of negligence, but on the contrary declares himself to be incorrigible. His short hour of inspiration having passed away, M. Lamartine has nothing to attract his attention or rouse him to exertion; for "a collection of verses," says he, "is, after all, one of the merest trifles in the world."

It was not thus that the great poets of other times, and Virgil especially, whom M. Lamartine calls the master of poetry, worked and understood their art. They grew old and pale in the accomplishment of the task which they had undertaken. Their bodily frame was wasted by the fire which glowed within them. They did not disdain to revise, to polish, and beautifully to round many a line of their inimitable works; for they felt all the sublimity of their god-like art, which descends like inspiration on a favoured few, and which enables them sympathetically to transmit all its divine influence to a crowd of readers. They devoted themselves to the accomplishment of an object worthy of their country, and which would endure as long as that country was known. They remembered that Homer had done more for Greece than all her legislators of ancient times could accomplish; and

they wrote as if the shades of all the illustrious children of song hovered over them and observed them. This want of fidelity to the art to which they profess to be devoted, and the mission to which they had pledged themselves, is a sign of profound decay in poetry; and we cordially unite with the French critic of the *Revue des deux Mondes** in condemning this culpable carelessness, which the young poets of the present day seem but too much disposed to imitate. Let the God of Poetry alone preside over the conception and essential development of a poetic work, and all will be well: no arbitrary rules, no cold precepts of imitation, must interpose to cramp the imagination of the poet. But then let not the author refuse to perform the labour of his task,—that of arranging his works according to the forms and details recognised by him and his brethren, and which are of vital importance. It is not necessary to become a Homer or a Dante in order to effect this. Whatever may be the talent of the writer, all the works which he undertakes for the benefit of society, or with a view to the general good, should be rendered as complete as possible; but in the present day no one professing the principles which I have just now cited, and appearing to have so just a view of the actual problem of humanity, can be permitted to undertake any of his works without designing them for the noble purpose of the ameliorisation of his brethren. I have sufficiently shown, that

* *Review*, 1 April. The critic is M. Saint Beuve, who, if we may judge by his *Pensées Août*, might benefit by the advice which he gives.

there is, at the present day, a paramount necessity to reconcile human life with poetry, and society with poets; but in order to effect this, the two camps so long separated must make equal advances to each other. If we cannot anticipate a new and fruitful manifestation of genius before it is imperatively called for by public opinion, neither can we flatter ourselves that the public will accept of works carelessly written, and not inquire what they might have been, or ought to have been.

In fact, that which I have to object to in the language of M. Lamartine does not at all surprise me in him—it is but the necessary consequence of that poetic individuality which was so palpable in every line of his *Carrière*. It is not, as M. Saint Beuve would persuade us, a visible change in some of his opinions which causes his fall—that change is a progress. The intelligence of M. Lamartine is certainly more advanced than it was ten years ago; and it cannot but be allowed that the author of the *Utopia* is nearer to the actual character of human life than is the author of the *Ode to M. Bonald*. It is rather the little relation which there is between the intuition of M. Lamartine and the knowledge of the means which alone can reduce it to reality; it is the disproportion which exists between his imagination and the actual powers of his mind. He divines the end, but not the path which will conduct to it. He has beautiful glimpses of the future, but he is chained to the past by his faults, by his imagination, by his artificial style,

and, indeed, by all that constitutes his poetic being. When the advancement of the age carries him forcibly to the feet of the veiled God, who will one day appear in all his glory, he still murmurs his old idolatrous prayer, knowing but little of the social world, his whole world is in himself; he has a vague idea, but no real conception of the changes which are taking place.

He is fully conscious of this unnatural state of mind, this want of energy, and he despairs of being able to conquer it; and therefore he begins to think slightingly of poetry, as a rebellious instrument which he has not the power to model to the fashion of the present day. Accustomed to the habit of viewing things in petty detail, and forming a limited and incomplete opinion of general life, he feels himself lost when he gazes upon an horizon enlarging before him every day; and feels himself becoming more and more insignificant as society becomes elevated and improved. He has a confused notion of the state of modern opinion; he has observed some of the indications of the transformation which political circumstances have effected in it, but he is ignorant of the great law of unity which governs the world; ignorant that every new conception is a new object, a new end and aim proposed to society, and towards which every instrument must sooner or later converge, a power to which all the terms of the equation must be by degrees raised. He sees the decline of everything which is not of a political nature—while on the contrary I

perceive its elevation. On account of these views he has divided the world into two parts—the social, or that of action and humanity, and the political: he allows poetry no other world but that of man, of individual and isolated thoughts.

The present question—but which I think will soon be decided—is between M. Lamartine and those who think with me that the mission of the poetic art is identical with that of the social world, and that the former ought to be improved and enlarged so as to keep pace with the moral improvement and advance of the latter. It is a question between two definitions of poetry, one of which may be given in the words of M. Lamartine, "*La poësie est un chant intérieur*,"* and the other in the words of the extraordinary man who, nearly three centuries ago, said it was

> "The prophetic soul
> Of the wide world dreaming on things to come."†

* Poetry is an inward song. † Shakspeare's *Sonnets*, 107.

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